Elf 2

by
Scot Armstrong

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FADE IN:

MUSIC CUE: BAD 'MUSAK' PLAYS FROM CRAPPY OFFICE SPEAKERS.

INT. DENTIST OFFICE - WAITING ROOM - DAY

WIDE SHOT of a DENTIST OFFICE waiting room. BUDDY waits, wearing his official ELF SUIT, including tights and hat.

For Buddy, being forced to sit in a waiting room chair is excruciating. He can't sit still. He holds a 'Walking Magazine' pretending to read.

Now Buddy stares at a woman. She tries to ignore him.

BUDDY
(loud whisper)
It's really quiet in here, isn't it?

The woman nods and goes back to reading.

BUDDY
(to himself)
Super quiet.

Buddy stands up and saunters over to the desk. The receptionist does not look up. A TREASURE BOX full of little toys is next to her.

RECEPTIONIST
(without looking up)
You can open the treasure box *after* the appointment.

BUDDY
I wasn't going to ask about the treasure box.

RECEPTIONIST
Yes you were.

BUDDY
No I wasn't.

DENTAL NURSE (O.S.)
Buddy Hobbs?

A nurse is dressed in white, holding Buddy's file.

BUDDY
(to receptionist, leaving)
I wasn't going to ask about the treasure box. I had a totally different question.

INT. DENTIST OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Buddy's in the DENTIST CHAIR, wearing a paper bib over his suit. A nose mask pumps gas into his lungs. Two other NURSES are in the room, preparing for the procedure.

DENTIST
Your teeth look worse than ever, Buddy. Novocaine just isn't going to do the trick. Right now, your nose mask is delivering Nitrous oxide into your system. It's a safe and effective way to control pain. Are you feeling anything yet?

BUDDY
No. I'm cool..

The dentist motions for Nurse #1 to turn up the gas.

DENTIST
(as the gas flows)
Once in a while, the gas will effect people in unusual ways, but chances are, this will make you feel more... *Happy.*

BUDDY
That's impossible. I'm already as happy as you can get.

DENTIST
Well, this will numb you for the procedure. By now, you should be feeling a bit 'happy.' Are you feeling it?

BUDDY
No. Not really, I mean I--
(beat)
WAIT! Hold on...

BUDDY FREEZES. HE SUDDENLY SENSES SOMETHING. HE CONCENTRATES INTENSELY, TRYING TO REGISTER HIS FEELINGS.

BUDDY
What unblessed potion is this?

DENTIST
It's not unblessed potion, Buddy. Just relax and try to breathe.

BUDDY
(freaking out)
No more nose mask.

Buddy wants the mask off, but the dentist STOPS HIM.

DENTIST
Just relax. Ellen, Grace, hold him please.
(holding the mask)
Just breathe.

BUDDY STRUGGLES, BUT THEY MANAGE TO KEEP IT ON HIM.

NOW BUDDY SUDDENLY STOPS. EVERYONE STOPS. BUDDY INHALES, ALLOWING THE GAS TO WORK. BUT THE 'HAPPY GAS' SEEMS TO BE HAVING THE OPPOSITE EFFECT ON THE 'HAPPY BUDDY.'

BUDDY
(feeling it)
I'm not happy.
(deranged from nitrous)
I'm a grabby greedy goody glutton.

The nurses look at each other.

DENTIST
Buddy, you're not a grabby greedy goody glutton.

BUDDY
Yes I am. The grabby greedy goody glutton wants treasure.

DENTIST
Just close your eyes and calm down.

BUDDY
The treasure. Bring me the treasure.

DENTIST
Grace, give me the headphones, Ellen turn on Kenny Rogers, Love Songs.

THE DENTIST TRIES TO PUT THE HEADPHONES ON, BUT BUDDY WON'T LET IT HAPPEN. HE STANDS UP, YANKING TUBES OUT AND PULLING THE CONSOLE OVER.

DENTIST
Buddy, sit down!

BUDDY
(using a sixth sense)
I know it's here.

INT. DENTIST OFFICE - RECEPTION - CONTINUOUS

Like a monster, Buddy emerges into reception, nose mask on, tubes dangling, the console dragging behind him.

The dentist and nurses are trying to hold Buddy back, but he's too strong.

ANGLE ON: THE RECEPTIONIST HOLDS THE TREASURE, she's trapped with her back against the wall.

RECEPTIONIST
(with a harsh scolding)
BUDDY, STOP!

BUDDY
I'm sorry Marion.

BUDDY GOES FOR THE TREASURE, BUT HIS NOSE IS SUDDENLY CLOTHES-LINED -- SNAPPED BACKWARDS BY THE TUBE MASK. HE FALLS OUT OF FRAME, POUNDING HIS HEAD INTO THE FLOOR.

RECEPTIONIST
Buddy?

PAPA ELF (V.O.)
So, ready for another story are you?

INT. PAPA ELF'S HOUSE - NORTH POLE - DAY

Bob Newhart addresses the audience as PAPA ELF, our narrator.

PAPA ELF
(speaking to camera)
Let's get you up to speed on Buddy the Elf, or Buddy the human, which ever way you want to look at it.

EXT. NEW YORK - DAY

A beautiful winter day in New York City.

PAPA ELF (V.O.)
Acclaimed author, family man, lover of Christmas... Buddy had done well in New York City.

INT. PRESS CONFERANCE - DAY

A packed press conference. Photographers snap some photos of Buddy, the Christmas writer.

PAPA ELF (V.O.)
Christmas after Christmas, Buddy would always release a new best seller.

REPORTER
Tell us, where are you going to spend Christmas this year, Buddy?

BUDDY
Oh, we always walk up to the North Pole for Christmas.

The crowd laughs at Buddy's 'joke.'

PAPA ELF (V.O.)
See, most people never believed that Buddy was really raised as an Elf. To the public, Buddy was just an eccentric children's author with an over-active imagination.

EXT. NEW YORK STREETS - DAY

Buddy walks through New York. He knows a lot of the people in his neighborhood.

PAPA ELF (V.O.)
He kept wearing his Elf suit, by the way. Nothing else gives more comfort and breathe-ability than the cloth of the family. It didn't hurt his book sales, either. His publicist called it, um, positive branding.

QUICK CUTS: A guy in a Guerrilla costume hands out flyers. A Goth couple walk past. A union-worker protests a site, dressed as a rat.

PAPA ELF (V.O.)
And New York was already so full of different characters, most people never thought twice about the way Buddy dressed.

INT. NEW YORK APARTMENT - DAY

CLOSE ON: A cool red and green bob sled waits at a starting line. Buddy is tinkering underneath.

PAPA ELF (V.O.)
Of course, there were people that knew the truth, that Buddy was actually raised in the North Pole.

A well-lit Zooey Dechanel has a Christmas sparkle in her eye. This is JOVIE.

JOVIE
Are you sure about this?

PAPA ELF (V.O.)
There was Buddy's wife, Jovie...

Buddy pokes his head out from underneath, like a mechanic.

BUDDY
We're okay to go.

PAPA ELF (V.O.)
And there was also Buddy's biggest fan in the whole wide world.

REVEAL SUSIE. She stands over the bob sled, strapping on a hockey helmet.

SUSIE
Alright. Let's do this.

PAPA ELF (V.O.)
Susie was growing up, all right. Buddy was an official-card-carrying Papa Elf himself.

Mom and Dad finish strapping their daughter into the bob sled and prepare to send her on this wild ride.

BUDDY
Okay, ready?
(about to push, syncing up)
On eleven.

JOVIE
How about, on three?

BUDDY
Either way. Ready?... One... Two...
(Jovie and Buddy shove Susie)
THREE!

WIDE -- REVEAL: THEY'RE IN A SMALL NEW YORK APARTMENT.

AN ENTIRE BOB SLED TRACK HAS BEEN CRAMMED INTO ABOUT 800 SQUARE FEET. It's amazing how many loops and turns Buddy has fit into this tiny space.

Susie twists and turns around curve after curve without ever leaving the living room.

ANGLE ON: The track leads to a wall of padding that's set up to catch Susie, with a target drawn in the center.

Susie misses the target, slamming hard into the wall. But she's okay.

BUDDY
(re: his engineering)
My fault. That was me. I'm a noodle noggin.

EXT. CENTRAL PARK - DAY

Buddy is looking up at a tree, visibly upset.

BUDDY
(tortured)
Why!?

An officer walks over.

OFFICER
Sorry, Buddy, we had to tear your tree house down again. Rules are rules.

ANGLE ON: A gigantic tree-house has been loaded onto a flatbed truck.

PAPA ELF (V.O.)
New York was their favorite city, but there was one thing Buddy and his family were missing: A back yard.

EXT. NEW JERSEY TURNPIKE - DAY

A MOVING TRUCK drives out of Manhattan, the skyline behind it. It's winter.

PAPA ELF (V.O.)
And so, Buddy, Jovie and Susie set their sights on a whole new world--

EXT. SUBDIVISION - DAY

We track along houses of a typical suburban street.

PAPA ELF (V.O.)
The suburbs.
(beat)
Jovie would work at the High School as a music teacher... And Buddy would be a stay at home Dad that writes from home...

The camera stops on Buddy's house. The moving truck is parked in front. Jovie, the New Yorker, looks around their new neighborhood.

JOVIE
Never in a million years did I think I'd ever do this.

BUDDY
I wonder what Christmas is like out here.

Jovie puts her arm around Buddy and they look up at the moon...

JOVIE
I guess we'll find out, won't we?

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BUDDY'S HOUSE - NEXT MORNING

Buddy's house is already painted red, white and green.

INT. BUDDY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Buddy, Jovie and Susie are eating breakfast. Buddy pours syrup all over his cereal and offers some to Susie. Jovie catches this.

JOVIE
(to Susie)
Hey. No syrup on your cereal.

SUSIE
Alright.

JOVIE
You know the rule: Syrup on Saturdays.
(to Buddy)
And I'd appreciate it if you could help me enforce our rules a little better.

BUDDY
Sorry. I forgot.

SUSIE
How come *he* gets to have syrup on his cereal every day?

JOVIE
Because your Dad likes to ruin his teeth.

BUDDY
It's true. I do.

JOVIE
(pointing)
Milk.

Susie pours milk on her cereal.

JOVIE
Well, I've got to head off to work.
(leaving, to Susie)
So, you ready for your big debut?

SUSIE
I think so.

Buddy, Jovie and Susie all look at each other and take a collective breath.

SUSIE
Day one.

BUDDY
Day one.

EXT. SUSIE'S GRADE SCHOOL - DAY

A cute brick grade school surrounded by snow. Buddy has his hands on Susie's shoulders, supportive.

BUDDY
You know, on my first day of toy school, I smashed my hand with a mallet... And I burned down the factory. Everyone survived. So don't be nervous.

SUSIE
Thanks.
(beat)
I already miss my New York friends.

BUDDY
I know.
(beat)
Do you have your Etcha-sketch?

SUSIE
Always do.

Buddy and Susie pull out tiny Etcha Sketches. They hold them like Blackberrys.

PAPA ELF (V.O.)
Those mini Etcha-Sketches were a gift from me, by the way. I tinkered them special, so Buddy and Susie could write to each other.

BUDDY
(re: His Etcha Sketch)
I'll send you a message in ten minutes... And then you can send one back... And then we'll just go from there...

SUSIE
I already sent you one, 'nogg face.

BUDDY
I'll pick you up later!

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Susie sits in class, next to two preppy sisters, JESS and JAMIE.

TEACHER
We all know what it's like to be the new person. So let's all do our best to welcome her into the class. How about a big round of applause for Susie Hobbs!

The class claps. One voice cheers inappropriately LOUD.

VOICE (O.S.)
WOO HOO! YES!

REVEAL: BUDDY IS STANDING IN THE CLASSROOM.

The teacher is confused. Buddy suddenly feels everyone looking at him.

BUDDY
Sorry. I'm Susie's Dad. Just making sure everything's cool.
(awkward beat)
Okay, I'm leaving.

PAPA ELF (V.O.)
With Susie safe in School, Buddy had his first chance to explore the new world of the Suburbs.

MUSIC CUE: DAVID BOWIE'S 'SPACE ODDITY.'

DAVID BOWIE (V.O.)
GROUND CONTROL TO MAJOR TOM...

MONTAGE: BUDDY EXPLORES THE SUBURBS:

1) Buddy, walking briskly in his Elf suit through the neighborhood, passes by some SPEED WALKERS and waves.

2) Buddy walks along the side of a six lane highway in his Elf suit. Then: Around an off ramp.

DAVIE BOWIE (V.O.)
FIVE, FOUR, THREE, TWO, ONE, LIFTOFF.

3) A construction worker holds up a sign: 'SLOW.' Buddy slows way down, walking in slo-mo past the man.

4) Buddy stands in line at the DRIVE THRU. The car ahead of him moves forward and Buddy walks up to a clown-faced speaker box.

DRIVE THRU VOICE (O.S.)
May I take your order?

The noisy, crackly, clown face scares Buddy at first...

BUDDY
Um, four chocolate sundaes and a strawberry milk shake to go please.
(beat)
WAIT! And twelve chocolate chip cookies... And another shake.

DRIVE THRU VOICE (O.S.)
You're going to need a car. This is a *drive thru.*

BUDDY
Well, I like to walk.

DRIVE THRU VOICE (O.S.)
I'm sorry, I can't serve you without a car. It's, like, a rule.

An SUV pulls in and accidentally bumps Buddy out of frame.

5) A giant suburban mall. Buddy is blown away by the sheer scope of this place. A sea of cars covers the lot. Buddy enters...

DAVE BOWIE (V.O.)
THIS IS MAJOR TOM TO GROUND CONTROL. I'M STEPPING THROUGH THE DOOR...

INT. MALL - DAY

This is no New York department store. This is suburban sprawl at it's grandest. Now Buddy stops in his tracks.

REVEAL: A gigantic store says 'CANDY EMPORIUM.'

INT. CANDY EMPORIUM - MOMENTS LATER

This place is basically a warehouse filled with tons of candy. The sheer size is absolutely overwhelming. Buddy shuffles down the aisle, his mind melted.

DAVE BOWIE (V.O.)
AND I'M FLOATING IN A MOST PECULIAR WAY... AND THE STARS LOOK VERY DIFFERENT TODAY...

FALCON (O.S.)
Buddy Hobbs.

MUSIC STOPS.

Buddy turns around to find FALCON, a weird community-college drop out. He works here.

BUDDY
Hi... You know me?

FALCON
Duh. You're only, like, the coolest writer in the world.

BUDDY
Is this, like, a museum?

FALCON
No, all this is for sale. But that's a solid idea. My name is Falcon.

BUDDY
(shaking hands)
Buddy.

FALCON
(re: all the candy)
You dig on the sweets?

Buddy nods, the understatement of the century.

FALCON
Me too.

INT. CLASSROOM - MEANWHILE

The class is watching an illustrated slide presentation. The first slide says 'Christmas traditions from around the globe.'

TEACHER (O.S.)
(re: narrating slide show)
...And Christmas is a holiday that's celebrated not just here, but around the globe. And each country has it's own 'St. Nicholas' tradition.

Susie glances down at her Etcha-Sketch. On her tiny screen appears the words: '<u>YOU HAVE 17 NEW ETCHA-SKETCHES.</u>' Susie smiles and puts it away.

CLICK to the next slide: A man with a Bishop hat rides in a boat.

TEACHER (O.S.)
For instance, kids in the Netherlands believe St. Nick lives in Spain and travels by boat to Holland and wears the cap of a bishop and puts candy in shoes. Isn't that interesting?

CLICK. The next slide shows thirteen little goblins moving in a pack.

TEACHER (O.S.)
In Iceland, children believe a group of Christmas goblins lay Icelandic treats on window sills.

CLICK: An African American family dances.

TEACHER
Santa has recently become more visible in Rwanda. There, Christmas is a three day event where children feast on goat meat and drink banana beer.

CLICK. The next slide shows a guy in a red robe hiding under the floor.

TEACHER (V.O.)
And in Sweden, a gift-bearing Tomte lives under the floorboards until Christmas and then delivers Christmas porridge. How about *that* for a Christmas?

Susie holds her hand up.

TEACHER
Yes, um... Susie.

SUSIE
I'm sorry, but this stuff is all fake.

TEACHER
Excuse me?

SUSIE
None of that is true. There's only one Santa.

The teacher turns on the light.

TEACHER
Susie, I see that you believe in Santa Claus, but it's important to embrace other cultures too. People around the world celebrate things in different ways.
(beat)
This isn't one of your father's stories, this is the real world.

SUSIE
Well, in the real world, Santa Claus is Santa Claus. He doesn't live in Spain and he doesn't live under the floorboards.

The two preppy girls JESS and JAMIE look at each other.

TEACHER
Well, let's all just try to have an open mind, okay?

EXT. SUSIE'S SCHOOL - DAY

Buddy waits impatiently outside the school.

MR. MAXWELL (O.S.)
Hold on.

A suburban Dad rolls down the window of his SUV.

MR. MAXWELL
I recognize you. You're that writer, right?
(Buddy nods)
Our kids love your books.

BUDDY
Thanks. It's pretty easy when you've lived at the North Pole like I have.

MR. MAXWELL
(enjoying Buddy's 'joke')
Ha Ha. Good one.
(extending his hand)
Hi, I'm Mark Maxwell.

Buddy is about to shake hands, but--

SFX: THE SCHOOL BELL RINGS.

Buddy celebrates the school bell.

BUDDY
YES!
(to Mr. Maxwell)
WE'RE FREE!

INT. SUSIE'S SCHOOL - HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

JESS and JAMIE, the preppy sisters, follow along behind Susie. They look around, competing for position...

JESS
She's the first new girl in, like, forever.

JAMIE
I like her.

JESS
We better claim her, before she gets turned into one of Ashley's gang.

They both jog up to Susie.

JAMIE
Hey Susie...

EXT. SUSIE'S SCHOOL - DAY

We follow as they exit...

JESS
...What kind of coat is that?

Susie is wearing hand-made cold weather gear, with thick colorful patches.

SUSIE
It's a winter coat.

JAMIE
We know. We mean, what brand?

SUSIE
Oh, me and my Dad made it together.

To Jess and Jamie, this sounds kind of sad.

JESS
Oh. Well, if you get cold, you can always borrow a coat from us.

JAMIE
Yeah, we have, like, a million.

SUSIE
That's okay, I like this one.

JESS
It's cool to have you in class.

SUSIE
Oh, thanks.

OUT OF NOWHERE, A SNOWBALL TAGS SUSIE in the side of the head. That looked painful, but Susie is un-fazed.

ANGLE ON: Buddy, in his Elf suit, smiles and waves from the street.

A line of SUV's is picking up their kids. Buddy is in line with them, but instead of a car, he walks, pulling an ornate sled behind him.

SUSIE
Well, that's my Dad! I'll see you guys later.

JESS
Bye Susie!

JAMIE
Bye Susie!

Susie runs over and hops on the sled. Jess and Jamie look at each other.

INT. MR. SPICER'S SUV - CONTINUOUS

Here we meet MR. SPICER, the 'cool Dad' of the neighborhood. He talks into his hands-free SUV phone.

MR. SPICER
(speaking to his dashboard)
You'll never guess what's right in front of me right now. Our new 'Captain pointy toes' is pulling a *sled.*

MRS. SPICER (O.S.)
(from car phone)
A sled? Really? I guess that's kind of cute.

MR. SPICER
Cute? He's in the SUV line. I know writers are supposed to be insane, but seriously, this guy's eaten too much crazy bread.

Susie's friends Jess and Jamie hop into the SUV.

MR. SPICER
Hey guys!

JESS
Hey Dad!

JAMIE
Hey Dad!

The back seat of the SUV has a flat screen. Jess and Jamie immediately start playing a VIDEO GAME.

EXT. SUSIE'S SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

Susie is on the sled, holding on tight.

BUDDY
You ready?

SUSIE
Bring it.

QUICK CUTS: THE BUDDY SLED.

A SHARP TURN: Buddy comes running around the corner, Susie whips around on one rail, laughing. A dog barks and runs after them, but Buddy is too fast.

SUSIE
(re: the dog)
Hey pooch!

A SNOW COVERED CAR: Snow is packed into the shape of a ramp. Buddy sprints past, steering Susie over the lift -- She flies, lands hard, but stays on.

SUSIE
Nice try!

A FOUR-WAY STOP SIGN INTERSECTION: Buddy and Susie wait in traffic, bored. The rope is slack. Finally, it's their turn and Buddy walks through. Other parents are confused.

BUDDY'S HOUSE: Running toward the house at high speed, a squirrel hops into Buddy's path.

BUDDY
(yelling at the squirrel)
WATCH OUT JASON!

Buddy tries to avoid Jason the squirrel and ends up steering DIRECTLY INTO A TREE. BAM!

Susie coasts to a stop in her front yard and looks back. Jason the squirrel looks over. A moment of silence, until Buddy peeks out from behind the tree.

BUDDY
What do you want to do next?

EXT. BUDDY'S HOUSE - BACK YARD - LATER

Buddy and Susie have made good use of their back yard. Cool stuff has been built up all around.

A SKI JUMP ramp leads down from the roof, then shoots up directly into a net, designed to keep you in the yard.

Buddy is at the top, bent over his knees, aerodynamic, prepared for launch. Susie looks up, wearing a helmet.

SUSIE
CLEAR!

Buddy descends, but his skies wobble and he loses his balance, falls forward and slides at full speed, not unlike the Wild World of Sports 'Agony of Defeat.'

BUDDY
(falling)
Snog curdle.

Tangled in his skies, Buddy flies diagonally off the ramp, missing the net and twirling into the neighbor's yard. A cat shrieks. After a long beat:

BUDDY (O.S.)
OKAY, THAT ACTUALLY HURT.

EXT. JOVIE'S CAR - DAY

Jovie drives a red Honda Hybrid with green rims. A glitter-stenciled bumper sticker says 'BORN TO GIVE'

She pulls up to the house, but is unable to get into the driveway. She gets out at the curb.

REVEAL: Buddy and Susie have built a snow fort that takes over the entire yard. It's a village that leads to a castle with a large snow man population ruled by a queen.

A squirrel has crawled up the face of a snowman, the animal digs into the sculpture's face.

BUDDY
(cheerful, to the squirrel)
Careful Jason! I think that eye socket is deep enough.

Jovie steps out of the car, very impressed.

JOVIE
So, how do you get into the house?

Buddy points to a tiny dark opening in the snow.

BUDDY
You crawl through this hole.
(beat)
Watch!

They made the hole way too small, but Buddy won't admit it. He tries to fit into it, but it's not even close. His head and arms are in, but his butt is up in the air.

BUDDY (O.S.)
The first part's a little tight, but after that it gets more fun...
(finally giving up)
...Okay, I'm stuck.
(beat)
Hello?

Jovie and Susie look at each other.

JOVIE
Hmm. Let me think. Maybe we should...

Jovie suddenly TICKLES Buddy like crazy. Susie joins in.

JOVIE
Torture him.

ON BUDDY'S FACE: He's laughing so hard it's nuts.

BUDDY
(laughing insanely hard)
OKAY! OKAY!... KEEP DOING IT!

EXT. SPICER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

We're at Mr. Spicer's house, the biggest on the block.

We can HEAR the sound of different electronic GADGETS competing with each other from inside.

INT. SPICER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Each member of the Spicer family eats dinner in a different room.

QUICK CUTS: MR. SPICER: Scanning through Tivo. JESS: Texting someone from her phone. JAMIE: Eating and playing video checkers.

RING RING! Mr. Spicer stops eating and pops his head into his daughter's TV room.

MR. SPICER
Was that your new cell phone?

JESS
Not mine.

JAMIE
I think it was the door bell.

BUDDY & FAMILY (O.S.)
(singing)
JINGLE BELL, JINGLE BELL, JINGLE BELL ROCK. JINGLE BELLS SWING AND JINGLE BELLS RING...

The Spicer's look at each other. What's that noise?

EXT. THE SPICER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Buddy, Jovie and Susie are caroling, all dressed in their very own Elf costumes, including tights and hats.

The Spicer family opens their door, slowly revealing themselves. They look on with blank stares.

You could call this caroling, but it's much more than that. This is a ridiculous, fully choreographed song and dance number that takes over the whole yard.

A CASIO KEYBOARD is set up in the snow, each of the Hobbs take turns playing back ground, all part of the show.

BUDDY & FAMILY
GIDDY-UP JINGLE HORSE, PICK UP YOUR FEET!

They do some nifty Ice Capade spins. Now Buddy grabs Jovie's wrists and swings her around.

For the finale, each person poses and hits their line...

BUDDY
THAT'S THE JINGLE BELL--

JOVIE
THAT'S THE JINGLE BELL--

Now, it's time for Susie to hit the final note -- She slides through on her knees.

SUSIE
(belting it out)
THAT'S THE JINGLE BELL ROOOOOOOOOCK!

Ta-da! They hold the pose, breathing heavy and smiling, almost like a 'Lord of the Dance' video.

MR. SPICER
(sarcastic)
Wow. Gee whiz. We all sure enjoyed *that one.*

BUDDY
(celebrating)
YES!
(relieved)
To be honest, I thought we were a little tight.

JOVIE
He was being sarcastic, Buddy. Remember sarcasm?
(Buddy is confused)
When someone inflects their voice like that, it means the opposite of what their saying.
(Buddy is lost)
I'll explain it again later.

MR. SPICER
I can explain it. That was... how do you say... *Lame.*

SUSIE MEETS EYES WITH JESS AND JAMIE. For the first time, she feels a <u>TINGE OF EMBARRASSMENT</u>.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BUDDY'S HOUSE - EARLY MORNING

The sun rises over yet another set of decorations.

EXT. BUDDY'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Buddy's bedroom features a sled bed. A big sleigh with a queen sized mattress.

Jovie is sound asleep. We pan over to Buddy, whose eyes are wide open, trying to lie still. The clock says 4:55.

Buddy, bored in bed, actually starts whistling a tune. Jovie doesn't move, eyes closed, sleeping.

BUDDY
(loud whisper)
Jovie. Are you awake?

Jovie speaks while half asleep, as if this happens every morning.

JOVIE
No.

BUDDY
Are you sure?

JOVIE
Yeah. I'm sleeping.

BUDDY
Who's your favorite squirrel?

JOVIE
Jason.

BUDDY
I'm going to go paint the house a little bit greener.

JOVIE
I'm going to sleep.

BUDDY
Okay. Have fun.

Buddy pops up, absurdly alive. Jovie falls back asleep.

INT. BUDDY'S HOUSE - DAY

Buddy, Jovie and Susie are back at the breakfast table.

BUDDY
...And then the winner gets to do the dishes, okay?

SUSIE
Deal.

Buddy places a TWO-LITER COKE in front of himself. Then, a 16 oz. Coke in front of Jovie. Finally, a 12 oz. can is set in front of Susie.

JOVIE
(to Susie)
You're allowed one Coke today. Are you sure you want to drink it in the morning?

SUSIE
I'm sure.

JOVIE
Well then, prepare to be destroyed.

BUDDY
...Ready...

SUSIE
...Set...

JOVIE
GO!

ALL THREE OF THEM CHUG THEIR COKES.

It's an impressive display, but in the end, JOVIE WINS. She raises her arms above her head like Joe Namath.

And now, all three of them BELCH at different octaves, almost harmonizing.

JOVIE
Thanks for letting me crush you, but now it's time for you to get to school.

SUSIE
I know...

JOVIE
(to Buddy)
So, Buddy, do you have any big plans for today?

BUDDY
Me and Jason are going to build a giant pirate ship for Susie and I to play in after school.

JOVIE
(happy for Susie)
Actually, Susie got invited to play at Jess and Jamie's house this afternoon.

BUDDY
YESSSS!!! That sounds awesome!
(beat)
We can have eggnog fights and paint all the rooms with glitter and slide down the stairs in our sleeping bags. Maybe I should build the pirate ship in *their* yard.

SUSIE
I don't think you're invited, Dad. It's for me to go... *Alone.*

BUDDY
Alone. Right.
(trying not to be sad)
Alone can be fun.

Buddy puts on a fake smile.

EXT. FRONT PORCH - MOMENTS LATER

Buddy and Jovie send Susie off to school with her lunch.

BUDDY
You sure you don't want me to pull you to school?

SUSIE
No, I'm okay. I'll just walk by myself.

BUDDY
Okay. I'll just say here, then.

SUSIE
Okay. See you guys later.

BUDDY
(calling after)
I won't follow along behind you at all!

Susie waves goodbye. This pains Buddy and Jovie knows it.

BUDDY
I don't know who these Jess and Jamie girls are, but I'm not sure I like it.

JOVIE
Buddy, in New York, her best friend was, basically, *you*. But I think it's good she wants to meet new people. I think it's healthy.

BUDDY
Are you sure?

JOVIE
Am I sure? No, I'm not sure about anything. I've never raised a daughter before.

BUDDY
Me either.

INT. CANDY EMPORIUM - MALL - LATER

Buddy is in the giant candy store, he's using his tiny etcha sketch to text Susie a message. He turns the little nobs of his magic 'blackberry.'

BUDDY
(turning nobs, etcha sketch)
N-o-w I'-m i-n a-i-s-l-e 7. Send.

FALCON (O.S.)
Is it not the Elf-meister? What's up bro?

Falcon has found Buddy.

BUDDY
Not much *bro*.

FALCON
Check out this T-shirt I totally made.

ECU: Falcon's shirt: A muscular female dragon slayer flies through the air in a bikini, brandishing a sword.

FALCON (O.S.)
Is this not the coolest girl you've ever seen in your life?

BUDDY
That's really pretty. What's her name?

FALCON
Brandi...

BUDDY
Hey, there's a girl who works next door named Brandi.

FALCON
(pretending it's not her)
What are the chances of *that happening?*
(beat)
Hey, we just got some fresh gum drops in, I put some aside for you.

BUDDY
Thanks Falcon. I'll take 9 pounds of those.

FALCON
Right on.

Falcon starts wrapping some up, like a butcher. Buddy keeps browsing...

BUDDY
And let's see, give me 16 pounds of these snow caps, 37 pounds of these gummy worms here and grab me 217 pixie sticks.

FALCON
(as he works)
It's all you, brother.

BUDDY
Do these malt balls come in green?

FALCON
I wish.

BUDDY
Hey Falcon, can I ask you a question?

FALCON
Lay it out.

BUDDY
You grew up here, right?

FALCON
Don't rub it in.

BUDDY
How old were you when you stopped wanting to hang out with your Dad all of the time?

FALCON
I don't know dude, probably like...
(beat)
One.

Buddy thinks about Susie, worried...

BUDDY
One, huh...

Now a MALL MANAGER walks over.

MANAGER
Hey Falcon, have you seen St. Clair anywhere?

FALCON
Hold on, let me check my schedule...
(pretending to read his arm)
Nope, it's not my turn to baby sit her.

MANAGER
Well she's driving me crazy. This is the third time she hasn't shown up. I've got a room full of Santas and no trainer.

BUDDY
Oh. I can train mall Santas. I used to train mall Santas in New York all the time. I'm super good at it.

Falcon and the manager look at each other, then back at the man in the Elf suit.

INT. SUSIE'S SCHOOL - CAFETERIA - LATER

Susie is un-packing her lunch. Jamie and Jess open Preppy lunch satchels: Chicken nuggets with curly fries.

Susie lifts a cool, giant over-sized thermos and unscrews the top. Now she places a giant bowl in front of her and pours out the bizarre contents.

JAMIE
What is that?

SUSIE
My Dad's allowed to make me lunch once a week. This is ice-cream lasagna.

Jess and Jamie look around to see who's watching them.

JESS
Maybe you shouldn't bring everything your Dad makes you into school.

SUSIE
Why?

JAMIE
It just looks a little weird, you know?

JESS
Yeah, you never know what people are going to think.

Susie suddenly gets self conscious and puts her lunch away.

JAMIE
We're just looking out for you.

JESS
You want some of my curly fries?

SUSIE
Okay... Sure...

INT. MALL OFFICE - DAY

A chalk board has tons of complex Christmas information, flow charts and detailed illustrations...

A room full of lame looking Santa candidates are in a line up. Buddy strolls past each man. When it comes to Christmas accuracy, Buddy is passionate.

BUDDY
(to mall Santa #1)
Clip that Beard. I want nine and half inches from the chin.

(to mall Santa #2)
That left dimple is pretty small, smile harder.
(to mall Santa #3)
Scrub that make-up off. Santa doesn't wear eye liner.
(to tiny Santa #4)
Santa weighs two sixty three and a half this year. You're going to need more pillows.

The next Santa is an African American guy...

BUDDY
(to the African American)
Looking good. Nice work.
(to the class)
All right, now let's try some roll playing. Lenny, you're first.

LENNY is another very weak excuse for a Santa. He sits in the throne at the front. All the Santa's waddle over and squeeze into tiny class-room desks.

BUDDY sits on LENNY'S LAP, playing the roll of child.

BUDDY
(in bizarre girl's voice)
Merry Christmas! I've been good. I'd like a choo choo train.

Lenny is momentarily stunned to have this big guy in an Elf suit on his lap.

BUDDY
Now you talk.

LENNY
Okay, um...
(roll playing as Santa)
Ho! A choo choo? Let's see, I can probably build a choo choo for--

BUDDY
--Okay, now stop. You're already wrong. Santa doesn't build the toys, Lenny. Ming Ming oversees all factory design and production line construction. Let's take it from the top. And this time, let's try not to sound totally fake.

Buddy gives an impassioned plea to the whole class.

BUDDY
C'mon mall Santas! Let's focus! These kids need us!

REVEAL: The class stares back, blankly.

EXT. SUSIE'S SCHOOL - LATER

Susie exits school with Jess and Jamie. They're all laughing together. Susie is wearing a hoodie jacket. The three of them walk toward Mr. Spicer's SUV together.

BUDDY (O.S.)
Susie! Over here!

ANGLE ON: Buddy is ready with the sled again. This time, Susie feels embarrassed as she walks over...

BUDDY
Did you make that jacket in school?

SUSIE
No, I borrowed it from Jamie.

BUDDY
Oh.
(re: the sled)
Well I found a route that's extra twisty this time. You are so dead.

SUSIE
If it's okay, I was going to ride with Jess and Jamie. I mean, I'm going to hang out with them anyway, so...

BUDDY
Oh. Sure, that's cool.

SUSIE
(whispering to her Dad)
Jess and Jamie are like the most popular girls in school.

BUDDY
Oh.

SUSIE
Everyone wants to be their friend. We're going to the mall.

BUDDY
You're going to play at the mall?

SUSIE
No, we're just going to *hang out.*

BEEP BEEP. Mr. Spicer's honks, but his horn sounds more like a cell phone ring tone. His SUV plays a honking version of 50 Cent's 'In Da Club.'

SUSIE
Well, I gotta go.

BUDDY
Um, okay. Bye.

Susie jumps in the back of Dr. Spicer's SUV. The video games are in full effect and the girls laugh at something as they drive off.

EXT. SNOWY STREET - DAY

Buddy sadly drags the empty sled behind him. Not in a good mood.

Suddenly, the dog from before takes off from a house and runs at Buddy, barking.

The dog has almost reached Buddy -- At the last second BUDDY TURNS AND SCREAMS AT THE DOG!

BUDDY
(barking back)
I WILL BITE YOUR FACE OFF!

The dog stops, whines and trots away.

PAPA ELF (V.O.)
Unfortunately, the more time Buddy spent in the suburbs...

EXT. MR. SPICER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Buddy walks by the Spicer's house, late night. Through the window, we see Jess, Jamie and Susie are playing.

PAPA ELF
(to camera as narrator)
...The less time he seemed to be spending with Susie...

PAN TO: Mr. Spicer has set up A GIANT GANDOLF, from Lord of the Rings, it stands glowing in the center of the yard. A sign says 'Gandolf! Lord of the neighborhood!!'

INT. PAPA ELF'S HOUSE - NORTH POLE - DAY

Papa Elf speaks to camera as narrator.

PAPA ELF
(to camera as narrator)
...But Buddy did everything he could to stay involved. He even volunteered for career day, and showed up to speak with Susie's class.

EXT. SUSIE'S SCHOOL - DAYS LATER

The little brick school is covered in snow.

MR. SPICER (O.S.)
...Don't get me wrong, I get to have some fun at my job, too...

INT. SUSIE'S SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

On the chalk board it says '**CAREER DAY.**' The neighbor we love to hate, MR. SPICER, addresses the class.

Susie sits in class. She is flanked by Jamie and Jess.

MR. SPICER
...Working for an oil company definitely has its perks. Any of you ever been to Antarctica?

KID
Antarctica? That must be the coolest place in the world!

MR. SPICER
I don't know if it's the coolest, but it's probably the coldest! We have four drilling stations down there. It's my job to make sure we stay on schedule.

KID #2
How do you get to Antarctica?

MR. SPICER
Two planes and then you need to ride in a special helicopter with two blades for the last part. See, it's hard for helicopters to fly down there because the air is so thin.

KID #3
Now *that's cool.*

ANGLE ON: Buddy stands in the wings, waiting to go next.

MR. SPICER
And guess what we have to wear at the drilling stations?
(no one knows)
HARD HATS!

Mr. Spicer unzips a duffle bag full of hard hats and starts passing them out.

MR. SPICER
THERE'S ONE FOR EVERYBODY!

The kids all go crazy for the hard hats. Within moments, everyone is happily sporting a hard hat that says '<u>Blue Sky Oil</u>'... Including the teacher.

Jess Clobbers Jamie hard on top of her helmet.

JAMIE
It works!

TEACHER
Thank you Mr. Spicer!
(beat)
Up next -- I'm sure many of you have read Susie's Father's books -- Let's put our hands together for Buddy Hobbs.

APPLAUSE. Buddy gets a warm reception. He is a semi-famous children's book author, after all.

Mr. Spicer stands off to the side, judging Buddy's performance.

BUDDY
(to Susie)
Hey fiddlehead.
(to the class)
Hey everybody.

ON Jesse and Jamie: *'Fiddlehead?'*

BUDDY
So, I didn't bring any hard hats, but I can give you a sneak peak at my new Christmas book! You'll be the first kids to hear my new story, before these pages go to press!

KID
Now that's cool.

KID #2
I'm so excited!

The kids are very excited about this. Buddy holds his book up and opens it.

BUDDY
It's not quite finished yet, but I'm calling it Koal Kringle 'The Story of the South Pole Elves.'

EXT. SUSIE'S SCHOOL - DAY

PAPA ELF (V.O.)
(narration)
Buddy went on to read his new story. It was a true story. I can vouch for that.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SUSIE'S SCHOOL - LATER

Buddy is in the middle of his story.

BUDDY
...And so Koal Kringle's been trying to take the North Pole down, ever since Santa Claus can remember. Now, when Koal Kringle was younger, he started out small-

EXT. NORTH POLE - DAY - FLASHBACK

Streams of toilet paper hang from everywhere. Graffiti has been spray painted around the North Pole.

BUDDY (V.O.)
He T-P'd the North Pole, egged Santa's house and wrote 'South Pole Rules' on Santa's sleigh.

INT. SANTA'S BEDROOM - FLASHBACK

We move across Santa's bedroom as he sleeps.

BUDDY (V.O.)
Another year, the South Pole Elves managed to sneak into Santa's bedroom while he was asleep...

REVEAL: Santa wakes up to find his Beard has been SHAVED OFF. His face is as pink as a baby's butt.

BUDDY (V.O.)
And shaved his beard.

Santa and his wife SCREAM.

EXT. SNOW - NIGHT - FLASHBACK

The eight angry wolves run through the snow ferociously. We see the sled of Koal Kringle but nothing more.

BUDDY (V.O.)
As the years passed, his work took a more wicked turn. He loaded up a sack with coal and rode a dog sled pulled by eight angry wolves, giving out as much coal to as many children as he could.

EXT. NORTH POLE - DAY - FLASHBACK

North Pole Elves run around in a panic. Smoke rises up in the distance as sand bags are being filled.

BUDDY (V.O.)
And just five years ago, he tried to melt an ice cap and flood our toy factory...

INT. SOUTH POLE - DINING HALL - FLASHBACK

A dining hall. Little elves wear mini-overalls and eat tiny flapjacks at little wooden tables.

BUDDY (V.O.)
Koal Kringle rules over his sad South Pole Elves, who work in the mining tunnels.

A little dusty Elf zips along on a mining cart.

BUDDY (V.O.)
Smiling and laughing aren't allowed in the South Pole. Santa says these Elves have never ever learned how to laugh.

A dusty Elf frowns.

INT. SUSIE'S CLASSROOM - DAY

ON Buddy's smiling face...

BUDDY
And they have a canary named Yuck, who only whistles sad songs.
(delighted with himself)
The... End...

Unfortunately, Buddy's story has not gone over well. Everyone looks at each other in a long awkward silence. A child adjusts his hard hat, uncomfortably.

Finally, someone speaks.

MR. SPICER (O.S.)
Pretty weak.

Mr. Spicer has chimed in from the side.

BUDDY
Weak?

KID
That's not a Christmas story. That's just a bunch of fake stuff.

KID #2
Well, his other books were good.

MR. SPICER
I give it two thumbs down.

Mr. Spicer holds out his fists, then emphatically points both thumbs to the floor.

BUDDY
This is a true story, guys. You can't give it two thumbs down if it's true.

MR. SPICER
Well, I just did.

KID #2
How could anyone not know how to laugh?

BUDDY
See, now that's a good question.
(beat)

I have no idea.
(recovering)
But it's a real thing. They don't laugh.

KID #2
The whole thing is dumb.

KID #3
Yeah and who would ever name a bird Yuck?
That's stupid too.

BUDDY
You guys, seriously, it can't be stupid
if it's true. That's the way it works.

JESS
How do you know it's true?

BUDDY
Because Santa told me.

JAMIE
Santa told you?

Everyone looks at each other. Boo.

SUSIE IS HORRIFIED by this. She slumps down, embarrassed. The TEACHER tries to do damage control.

TEACHER
(with a patronizing clap)
Okay, let's give Mr. Hobbs a hand. These are some interesting myth's he's invented here.

BUDDY
(too desperate)
They're not myths, they're real. They're Little Elves in overalls and coal mines! AND THEY ZIP AROUND LIKE THIS!!
(waves his hand wildly)

The class is frozen silent as Buddy breathes hard.

PUSH IN on Susie. She pulls the HARD HAT OVER HER FACE.

TEACHER
(breaking the silence)
So... Um... This has been great.
(beat)
Next up, I'd like to introduce Carol Lynn's Dad, he writes radio commercials.

Buddy walks silently past the door. Susie has been humiliated.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SUSIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Susie is getting ready for bed. Buddy wants to help.

BUDDY
So how's my little Knuckleberry Crackle?

Susie doesn't answer. She only faces the wall.

BUDDY
You ready to get tucked in?

SUSIE
Not tonight, okay Dad?

Buddy senses something is wrong. He hovers by the door.

BUDDY
Okay... I love you a million.

Buddy goes to turn out the light.

SUSIE
Dad?

BUDDY
Yeah?

SUSIE
How much of an Elf are you?

BUDDY
Well, I was born a human, but I was brought up Elf. And the North Pole, that place really sticks with a guy. I'd say I'm about half Elf.

SUSIE
Well, I don't want to be an Elf.

This hurts buddy, but he tries not to show it.

BUDDY
Well, I suppose you can be as much of an Elf as you want to be.

SUSIE
I just want to be *Normal*.

BUDDY
Hey, you can act normal, dress normal and blend in all you want. But you'll always be magic to me.

Buddy's words aren't comforting tonight. Susie turns toward the wall.

BUDDY
Good night, Susie.

SUSIE
Good night, Dad.

Buddy turns out the light.

EXT. BUDDY'S HOUSE - SKI JUMP - NIGHT

BUDDY SITS AT THE TOP OF THE SKI JUMP, looking up at the moonlight, thinking...

Now JOVIE CLIMBS UP, finding her husband. Without saying anything, she takes a seat next to him. They are quiet for a moment, until Jovie finally speaks.

JOVIE
When I first met you, it wasn't always easy for me, either. It took me a while to get used to things. You're not like other people.

BUDDY
If I'm not an Elf... And I'm not a human, what am I?

JOVIE
You're Buddy.

BUDDY
Right, Buddy the muttin-spangled beagle brain.

JOVIE
Listen to me. You're the best Dad Susie could ever ask for.

BUDDY
I'm not so sure about that.

JOVIE
What are you talking about?

BUDDY
Do you think...

JOVIE
What is it Buddy?

BUDDY
Do you think I embarrass her?

JOVIE
Listen, I can tell you from first hand experience, it's not easy to grow up as a girl. I remember, I used to get embarrassed by my parents all the time. And they looked like they came straight out of a toothpaste commercial.

BUDDY
She wants us to be normal.

JOVIE
I know she does.
(beat)
But, you're never going to be normal Buddy, that's what I love about you. But maybe we can just 'tone it down' for a little while.

BUDDY
(thinking)
Tone it down...

Jovie looks into his eyes.

JOVIE
You're one of my favorite Elves, you know that?

They move toward each other, ABOUT TO KISS -- but, they slowly start to SLIDE out of frame, DOWN THE SKI JUMP.

BUDDY (O.S.)
Wups.

JOVIE (O.S.)
AAAHHH!!!

We hear them zip off and crash land. A cat shrieks.

PAPA ELF (V.O.)
Susie was changing, there was no doubt about it. So, Buddy decided it was time for him to do a little growing up himself.

MUSIC CUE: ROLLING STONES 'START ME UP.'

MONTAGE: 'OPERATION NORMAL'

- Jovie opens the closet. REVEAL: The Elf suit is on a hanger.

MICK JAGGER (V.O.)
(singing)
IF YOU START ME UP!

- Buddy enters 'OLD NAVY'

- Buddy enters 'THE GAP'

- Buddy enters 'BANANA REPUBLIC'

MICK JAGGER (V.O.)
IF YOU START ME UP I'LL NEVER STOP!

-PAN DOWN THE NEW BUDDY: Old Navy cap, Gap sweatshirt, Cargo pants and velcro high-top Reeboks. Now he puts on a 'STARTER' jacket: Oakland Raiders.

- Buddy sits on a park bench, pretending to read a newspaper.

- The same women are 'speed-walking.' Buddy joins them, walking too properly, using lots of arms, high knees.

BUDDY
(to the speedwalkers)
Morning Kerry. Hey Maureen. Looking good Deanna.

- Buddy finishes painting the house blue. He has taken down the millions of decorations and replaced them with a simple wreath.

- Buddy is at Hooters, cheering loudly at a football screen, trying to fit in. People stare.

BUDDY
YES! A TIME OUT! WOO HOO!

MICK JAGGER (V.O.)
I'VE BEEN RUNNING HOT. YOU GOT ME TICKING GONNA BLOW MY TOP.

- Jovie leaves work, walks to her car. ECU: A NOTE SAYS: 'I PAINTED YOUR CAR BEIGE. HOPE THAT'S COOL. -BUDDY.' She tries to open the door, but the paint has dried it shut.

- A neon sign blinks 'ADULT BOOKS.' Buddy walks into the store... A beat. Now he hurries out, hiding his face.

MICK JAGGER (V.O.)
START ME UP!

- Buddy is at a spa, getting a facial, with mud pack on his face and cucumbers over his eyes. Buddy takes a cucumber off of his one eye and eats it, then looks around with his free eye, moving it around all weird.

-- A busy Starbucks. Buddy steps up to the counter.

BUDDY
Yes. Hi. I'd like to buy a, um, a Starbucks *blend of the day... Tall.*

STARBUCKS GIRL
(punching it in)
Okay.

BUDDY
And I'd like to buy a Starbucks mug. And, let's see, give me three of these Starbucks Jazz CD's, two Starbucks T-shirts, every single one of these green visors here... And this novel about Starbucks. And two more Jazz CD's, a tea press and another book. And a thermos.

The Starbucks girl just stares back.

- Buddy is parked, ready to start driving school. A boring instructor lays out the rules.

DRIVING INSTRUCTOR
(dead pan)
I've inspected the vehicle to make sure it's in good working order, including doors and seat belts. I've confirmed that the passenger side seat belt is readily available for the instructor's use.

I encourage you to relax, I've found it can have a positive effect on your performance. Do you have any questions for me before we begin?

BUDDY
Nope.

BUDDY FLOORS IT BACKWARDS, SHOOTING THEM OUT OF FRAME. WE HEAR A PLATE GLASS WINDOW SHATTERING.

BUDDY (O.S.)
(an Elf swear)
ALABASTER!
(beat)
Sorry! That was me, my fault guys.

MUSIC ENDS.

INT. CANDY STORE - MALL - DAY

Buddy is back at the candy store, hanging out with FALCON.

Buddy wears a FOOT LOCKER hat, A HILFIGGER sweatshirt, acid wash short-shorts and penny loafers.

FALCON
So... *Brian?*

BUDDY
Yep, Brian Hobbs. That's my new name. Sounds pretty regular, doesn't it?

FALCON
(testing it)
Brian.
(thinking)
I guess that's pretty *'regs'*.

BUDDY
I'll tell you, being normal isn't easy. I don't know how you do it.

FALCON
I just roll with the flow, yo.
(beat)
Check it out, I made you a giant gummy worm ball.

Falcon shows off an impressively huge candy globe.

BUDDY
Thanks, but no thanks, Falcon.

FALCON
Your loss, my lunch.

BUDDY
(staring hard at the candy)
No sweets for this guy. I'm on the wagon.

FALCON
You sure? You look like you want it.

Buddy stares at the candy so hard, his eyes are not unlike Smegal From Lord of the Rings.

BUDDY
(almost *possessed*)
Candy-no-eating-me-do-not-do.

FALCON
Are you okay dude?

BUDDY
(snapping out of it)
Oh yeah, sorry.
(beat)
Can I ask you a question?

FALCON
<u>BRING IT.</u>

BUDDY
Do you think women are more emotionally complex than men?

Falcon just stares back at Buddy... But now he launches into a philosophical tone that catches him off guard.

FALCON
Honestly, I think most women are stronger than men, because they aren't as afraid to get emotional, you know? Men, they hold their feelings in, they act all proud, but really, deep down, they're afraid. Suppressing emotions, that's what guys are all about.

BUDDY
(writing this down)
Note to self: Hold feelings in.

FALCON
Yep. Fear makes the world go round, yo.

BUDDY
Does your Dad hold his feelings in?

Falcon looks back at Buddy for a long beat. He tries to speak, but then almost cries. He stops himself and looks at the ceiling.

FALCON
WHY DON'T YOU SHUT UP, OKAY BRIAN? My Dad's busy, he doesn't have time to talk all the time, all right?

BUDDY
Oh. Okay, I'm sorry.
(Falcon is still upset)
Do you need a tissue?

FALCON
I SAID, SHUT UP!

Falcon indeed uses a tissue to dab his eyes.

BUDDY
Well, can I ask one more thing?

FALCON
Fine.

BUDDY
What kind of things do normal Dads do out here? I need ideas for some *normal stuff*.

FALCON
Well, if you want to be a total man-dork, you could always join the Wheaton Country Club. That place is *classic*, way-full of clones.

PUSH IN on Buddy's face.

MUSIC CUE: FRANK SINATRA 'THAT'S LIFE'

SINATRA (V.O.)
(singing)
THAT'S LIFE. THAT'S WHAT ALL THE PEOPLE SAY...

EXT. WHEATON COUNTRY CLUB - DAY

A sign says WHEATON COUNTRY CLUB. BUDDY walks toward the building, wearing knickers, a vest, a knit cap and spiked golf shoes. He carries a golf bag through the snow.

SINATRA (V.O.)
...YOU'RE RIDING HIGH IN APRIL. SHOT DOWN IN MAY. BUT I KNOW I'M GOING TO CHANGE THAT TUNE, WHEN I'M BACK ON TOP IN JUNE.

INT. WHEATON COUNTRY CLUB - DAY

Buddy stands, looking around in awe, soaking in the beauty of the room.

BUDDY
Now *this* is *Ritzy.*

REVEAL: Buddy is standing in the KID'S NURSERY, looking around at a colorful kid's play room.

BABY SITTER
Sir, this is for children only. Adults need to wait behind the divider.

BUDDY
Oh, right, sorry.

SINATRA (V.O.)
(singing)
I SAID THAT'S LIFE. AND AS FUNNY AS IT MAY SEEM...

INT. CLUB - CONTINUOUS

STEADY CAM with Buddy as he STRUTS through the club.

BUDDY
(addressing club members)
Hey there... How's it going...

SINATRA (V.O.)
SOME PEOPLE GET THEIR KICKS, STOMPING ON A DREAM.

BUDDY
(to a server)
That's a shiny tray...

Buddy notices a TINY LITTLE DOOR. Curious, he enters.

INT. RAQUETBALL COURT - CONTINUOUS

AN INTENSE RACQUETBALL GAME IS UNDER WAY. BUDDY'S THROWN INTO THE MIDDLE OF IT. He dips and ducks, golf spikes on a slick wood floor, the ball zinging around--

CLUB POV: Everyone watches as Buddy presses himself against the glass wall, the ball tags him in the head.

MUSIC ENDS

INT. DINING ROOM - LATER

Buddy enters the dining room.

HOSTESS
Would you care to be seated?

BUDDY
(sensing something)
HOLD ON.
(sniffing the air)

Buddy turns to a Christmas tree with presents underneath.

BUDDY
(using a sixth sense)
Those presents over there... They're just empty boxes, aren't they.

HOSTESS
Yeah. They're for decoration.

BUDDY
I've seen this game before. It's the work of a sick mind.

MR. SPICER (O.S.)
Hold everything, is that Johnny Green Jerk?

Mr. Spicer is with a group of pals.

MR. SPICER
Got the knickers on today, I see. Nice touch.

BUDDY
Oh, thanks Phil. How are things?
(trying to sound rich)
Quite a day, huh? HA HA HA!

MR. SPICER
Listen, we were just about to head back to the game room. We'd love for you to join us.
(up to something)
How's that sound, Buddy?

BUDDY
You can call me Brian.

INT. WHEATON COUNTRY CLUB - POKER ROOM - DAY

CLOSE ON: A poker table. We pan past piles of chips in front of players, until we reach a special set of chips:

REVEAL: Buddy's chips are built up like A GIANT LEGO-LAND CASTLE, with towers, windows and a stair case.

Everyone's stares at each other with a poker face...

Buddy uses all his might, TRYING NOT TO SMILE.

POKER MAN
I fold.
(upset, to Buddy)
It's yours.

MR. SPICER
(frustrated)
You've sure got some beginner's luck going there.

BUDDY
(trying to fit in)
Sure do! HA HA HA!

POKER MAN
Take your chips.
(irritated, helping him)
Here.

BUDDY
(re: his castle of chips)
Oh good. I can put in a moat.

POKER MAN #2
(opening a package)
Anyone want a Rolaids?

BUDDY
No candy for me, thanks.

Mr. Spicer lights up a cigar and smokes.

MR. SPICER
How about a cigar? You want one of these?

BUDDY
(scared)
Okay.

Buddy puts it in his mouth and Mr. Spicer holds the match for him. Buddy inhales the cigar way too fast. He tries not to cough, holding it in, trying to play it cool.

MR. SPICER
That's a Cuban, *Brian*. What do you think?

BUDDY EXPLODES, COUGHING LIKE CRAZY. The coughing goes on and on. He stands up to get more 'oomph' into his cough.

Stumbling around, coughing harder, dizzy, this is the longest, weirdest coughing sequence ever put on film. Buddy eventually sits back down and rejoins the game.

BUDDY
Sorry, I'm okay. All clear.

Buddy coughs huge again. Everyone looks at each other.

POKER MAN
(back to the hand)
Well, I'll call that twenty and I'll raise you another twenty.

Buddy imitates everyone with his chips, essentially gambling it all on every single hand.

BUDDY
(to the guy next to him)
I like your visor.
(the guy just looks back)
I really hope you win.

POKER MAN
What are you, some kind of smart guy?

BUDDY
I just think it would be fun if you win for once.

MR. SPICER
(sarcastic)
He's a smooth operator, Richard.

POKER MAN
(angry)
You want to play mind games with me? I'll take you out.

BUDDY
(pleased)
Okay.

POKER MAN
You know what, I'll call.
(cocky, showing cards)
Three tens, baby. Read it and weep.

MR. SPICER
(tossing his cards)
This is the worst luck of my life.

Buddy holds his cards to his chest, enjoying them.

MR. SPICER
You have to show us your cards, Brian.
(Buddy hesitates)
How many times do we have to go through this? You'll get five new cards in just a second.

BUDDY
Promise?

MR. SPICER
Yes, now what do you have?

BUDDY
(unveiling card #1)
Ooh. A beautiful red lady with sparkling jewels and a pretty crown. She lives over in this room.

Buddy makes the card walk over to the corner of his poker chip CASTLE. Queen of Hearts now peeks out of a window.

BUDDY
Next, a woman of darkness with a thick robe holding a tray of poison pearls.

She's in the dungeon.
(places card in lower castle)
Ooh. A glorious man who rules all of the land. Dum Dum Da-Dum! He looks out from the top of the majestic tower of chips.
(places card top of castle)
Now, a confused red King decides to point a sword at himself. He lives under the stairs.
(last card)
And now, a wonderful red King who dreams of the red lady of sparkling jewels. He rides to the castle on a horse, ka-click ka-click ka-click, because he is in looooooooooove.

Everyone looks at Buddy. Now poker man slaps the table.

POKER MAN
Dang it!

MR. SPICER
(giving up)
That's a good hand you got there, Buddy.

Everyone shoves their chips towards Buddy's castle.

BUDDY
(smiling at the poker man)
Did you win?

The guy stares back at Buddy's smiling face, then pounds down on Buddy's castle with his fist.

EXT. MALL - DAY

The mall parking lot is packed.

INT. MALL - DAY

JESS and JAMIE have taken SUSIE holiday shopping. They walk with big brand-named bags hanging off of them.

REVEAL: BUDDY watches from afar. Dressed like a compassionate conservative, he adjusts his tie.

The girls walk into a salon that says: '<u>FOOT FANCY.</u>'

INT. MALL - SALON - LATER

JESS, JAMIE and SUSIE are all facing forward, in special, raised lounge chairs, shopping bags piled around.

Jess and Jamie are obviously kids, but they're trying hard to sound like adults.

JESS
(trying hard to sound adult)
You've really never had a pedicure before?
(Susie hasn't)
Oh, they're awesome. I always order the 'foot patrol.'

JAMIE
It's an exfoliating cleansing scrub and hydrating foot massage. But, I'm getting the lemon verbena.

JESS
It's a lemon lime wrap with nail shaping and cuticle care. And they message you with Jojoba beads.

A pedicure lady walks up to welcome them.

PEDICURE LADY
Hi girls. We're offering a holiday special this year. We call it the 'chocolate fete for your feet.'

BUDDY (O.S.)
I'll take the holiday special.

REVEAL: BUDDY IS SITTING NEXT TO THEM.

SUSIE
Dad?

BUDDY
(lying)
Oh. Hey guys. Wow. I didn't see you there. I had no idea you were here at the mall, at all.

SUSIE
(re: Salon)
What are you doing *in here?*

BUDDY
Oh, you know me, I'm just doing the regular suburban thing, here in the suburbs, doing...
(at a loss for words)
...Whatever this is.

The pedicure lady returns, ready to go to work on Buddy. She takes off his shoes.

PEDICURE LADY
Okay, first I'm going to apply a chocolate and oak protein moisturizing solution.

SUSIE
Are you really getting a pedicure?

BUDDY
Of course. I do this all the ti--
(suddenly)
--OOOH!

The pedicure lady is rubbing Buddy's feet. He can barely control himself.

BUDDY
(melting with pleasure)
Scorched 'nilla. Wow. That is... *Miminy Piminy.*
(to the woman)
My toes feel like pink bunny noses.

JESS
(to Susie)
This is, like, *so wrong.*

BUDDY
(to the pedicure lady)
Your hands are like Abraham's bosom.

PEDICURE LADY
Thank you.

BUDDY
I'm sure people tell you that all the t--
(she begins the sugar scrub)
--Oh, Holy Luberland...

Buddy squirms, alive with pleasure. Everyone in the salon is looking at him. Susie gathers her things, humiliated.

SUSIE
C'mon you guys.
(to the lady)
We'll come back.

Buddy is so deep into this, he doesn't even notice as the girls walk out.

BUDDY
(in blind ecstacy)
For the love of pointy!

CUT TO:

EXT. BUDDY'S NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

It's a full moon. A beautiful winter night.

Buddy and Jovie walk hand in hand. Jovie is dressed as a reindeer. Buddy is BACK IN THE ELF SUIT.

JOVIE
(re: her reindeer costume)
I can't believe you're complaining about this. A Christmas costume party should be your favorite thing in the whole world.

BUDDY
(re: His Elf suit)
I just feel like an idiot in this thing.

Jovie stares at her husband, not knowing where to start. He scratches his collar.

BUDDY
It itches.

JOVIE
How can it itch? You've worn it your whole life!

BUDDY
Well, maybe my skin can only touch normal clothes from now on.

JOVIE
Honestly, Buddy I--

BUDDY
Call me Brian.

JOVIE
YOU'RE NOT BRIAN!

JOVIE SHOVES HIM and she's stronger than she looks. Buddy falls in a snow drift. After a beat, they both laugh.

JOVIE
Sorry about that.

BUDDY
It's okay, I still like snow.

MRS. GUNTHER (O.S.)
There they are!

ANGLE ON: Mrs. Gunther in her doorway, dressed as a 'SEXY SANTA' with a short skirt and red heels. She bends her knee high and kicks out her leg like a burlesque dancer.

JOVIE
(flirty)
Ho Ho... Ho.

Now she tops her strut off with a wink. For Buddy, this is totally disturbing.

BUDDY
(re: Costume, to Jovie)
What is she supposed to be?

JOVIE
(dry)
Trash.

INT. NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE - LATER - NIGHT

Five couples are all dressed up, gathered around a table. Dinner is about to begin. Mr. Spicer is dressed as a penguin, but it looks cool, like a tux.

MRS. GUNTHER
How about that, huh? Having a famous writer in our very own dining room!

MR. GUNTHER
She loves your books.

BUDDY
Thanks. It's pretty easy. They're mostly just stories from growing up.

MRS. GUNTHER
Isn't he precious?

Jovie rolls her eyes at Mrs. Gunther, the Sexy Santa.

Buddy spots a plate of DEVIL'S FOOD EGGS. He bites into one and instantly makes a horrible face.

BUDDY
Ugh. This tastes like an *egg*.

MRS. SPICER
(a little confused)
They *are* eggs.

Buddy catches himself.

BUDDY
(remembering to fit in)
I'm just kidding, I love eggs.

Everyone watches as Buddy chews the hard-boiled egg like a dog with peanut butter stuck to the roof of his mouth, Unable to swallow. Buddy smiles, finally forcing it down.

BUDDY
Great job, Barbara.

MR. GUNTHER
Tell me Phil, what's the hot toy on your girl's list this year?
(to everyone)
They're always way ahead of the curve.

MR. SPICER
Well, this year, we decided to go with gift certificates...

JOVIE
Gift certificates?

Jovie is clearly disgusted by the shallowness of gift certificates.

MR. SPICER
Yep. Gift certificates are easier to carry than real presents.

BUDDY
That's a good point Phil.

Jovie shoots Buddy a look.

MRS. SPICER
We always travel down to our time-share in Florida for Christmas, so they're easy to pack.

MR. SPICER
What are you guys buying Susie?

JOVIE
We're actually not buying anything. I'm making her a luge. Buddy's teaching me how.

BUDDY
It's a really normal luge, though.

MR. SPICER
What's a luge?

MR. GUNTHER
A luge is like a one-man bob-sled, right?

JOVIE
Yep. Now that we have the space for a bob-sled track, Buddy's going to put in an extra long one.

BUDDY
(totally bizarre)
AND! I'm NOT building her A new piano. It's NOT going TO be red and green, with red AND green keys. And the bench is NOT going to be red and green AT ALL.

Everyone is really confused by this. But Mr. Spicer picks up on it.

MR. SPICER
Let me guess, Buddy: Sarcasm?

BUDDY
YES! SARCASM!

Buddy pumps his fist in victory.

BUDDY
I AM building her a piano!
(to Jovie)
He got it!

EXT. SPICER'S HOUSE - MEANWHILE

GANDOLF, Lord of the Neighborhood' glows...

INT. SPICER'S HOUSE - MEANWHILE

A baby sitter reads Teen People.

INT. SPICER'S HOUSE - KID'S ROOM - MEANWHILE

JESS AND JAMIE'S ROOM: They are putting lip stick on Susie. She's a little girl, but she's been made up to look 'adult.'

JESS
If you don't believe it, then say it.

JAMIE
Yeah, if you don't believe it, say it out loud.

SUSIE
I don't have to say it.

JAMIE
Then you believe it.

JESS
Yeah. Why not say it?

Jess and Jamie stare at Susie, major peer pressure.

SUSIE
Fine.
(this is painful)
There is... No Santa Claus.
(upset)
There, I said it.

JAMIE
Now, if you could just explain that to your Dad!

JESS
Ha Ha.

JAMIE
If my Dad was as weird as yours, I swear, I'd run away.

SUSIE
(standing up)
Why don't you guys shut up?

JAMIE
Yeah, shut up Jess.

JESS
Sit down, I was just kidding, okay?

Susie is at a crossroads with her friends here.

She looks at both of them for a moment, then decides to sit back in the chair.

SUSIE
Fine.

JAMIE
Okay, good.
(applying lip stick)
Now tilt your head back more...

INT. NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MEANWHILE

Everyone is relaxing after the meal, having cocktails. Mrs. Maxwell is touching Jovie's hair.

MRS. MAXWELL
(re: Jovie's bangs)
We can totally do something with this. We've got the best salon here in town. We all go together on Saturdays. It's really fun.

JOVIE
(dry)
Yeah. That does sound like fun.

MR. GUNTHER (O.S.)
All right guys, it's charades time!

MRS. GUNTHER, the sexy Santa, carries a bowl with a bunch of little papers folded into it.

BUDDY
(to Jovie)
What's charades?

JOVIE
It's a game. It's fun.

MRS. GUNTHER
(making up the teams)
Let's mix it up. Everyone pair off. Buddy, why don't you and I be a team?

BUDDY
Okay. What do I do?

MRS. GUNTHER
It's a guessing game. Just watch what I do and whatever pops into your head, just yell it out.

BUDDY
Whatever pops into my head, I yell out.

MRS. GUNTHER
Right.

BUDDY
That *is* fun.

MRS. GUNTHER
Now, tonight's clues all have a *Christmas theme* guys, okay?
(beat)
Are we ready Buddy?

BUDDY
Ready.

Everyone watches as Mrs. Gunther reads a slip of paper and then tugs her ear as in 'sounds like...'

Buddy ignores all clues and immediately launches into a bizarre free-association at the top of his lungs.

BUDDY
(screaming at Mrs. Gunther)
CHRISTMAS! MONKEYS THAT PLAY HOCKEY!... A BLOCK OF ICE CARVED INTO A BADGER! WAIT! CANDY CANES! CANDY CORNS? NO, CANDY COOKIES! JASON THE SQUIRREL!

ECU: The tiny-toy hour glass. It's a race against time.

BUDDY
A CRAZY STRAW! A TOY HOUSE WITH PLASTIC PEOPLE WHO YOU PRETEND TO MAKE TALK! CHOCOLATE CANDY DOGS! A BOWL OF TWINKLE!

MR. GUNTHER
I'm afraid your time is up.

BUDDY
WAIT!!!

MR. SPICER
(enjoying this)
Hold on, guys. Let's give him one more guess.

BUDDY
(quiet and deliberate)
Okay, here goes.
(as if channeling the answer)
Christmas... Dog... Chocolate... Fun... Happy... Fun...(long pause)... Candy.

MR. SPICER
Close. The answer was 'Father Time.'

BUDDY
(furious)
BLANKETY-BLANK!
(beat)
Sorry Barbara, let me go again.

CUT TO:

EXT. THE NEIGHBOR'S HOUSE - BACK DECK - LATER

The group has moved out back, and some people are relaxing in the Gunther's HOT TUB. Everyone's brought their suits.

MR. GUNTHER
(calling off screen)
It feels great Buddy. C'mon in!
(beat)
If you forgot your swim trunks, there are some extras in the changing room.

Buddy appears, wearing a green full-piece bathing suit.

JOVIE
(from the hot tub)
Buddy, have you ever been in a hot tub before?

BUDDY
No.

JOVIE
Maybe you should skip this. You like things to be cold, remember?

BUDDY
(for everyone to hear)
Oh, C'mon honey. I'm sure I can handle it. It's just a normal hot tub, right?

The following is all said by Buddy as he slowly and painfully makes his way down into the steaming water.

BUDDY
(dipping his toe)
AH! LIME TARTS.
(to the group)
I can do it.
(scalding himself)
Ow. Ow. OW. OW. OW! **OW. OW!** **OW!!**
(in Elf swears)
FOG BLAST! ALABAMA SLUSH MELT!
(to everyone)
I apologize, that was rude.
(mind over matter)
Not hot. Not hot at all. Cold. Very cold. Feels like Blizzards. Ice nuggets... Tundra...
(settling in)

Buddy finally settles in, up to his neck. He relaxes, but his eyes are wide open.

BUDDY
(suddenly)
AAAAAHHHHHHH!!!--
(stopping on a dime)
--No, I'm okay, I can handle it.
(relaxing)
Hi.

Everyone tries to relax, but they're on pins and needles.

Now, out of nowhere, a drunk MR. SPICER comes out of the house wearing BUDDY'S ELF COSTUME, tights and the whole deal.

MR. SPICER
(wearing Buddy's costume)
Look at me, I'm Buddy the Leprechaun!
(doing a little dance)
La-la-la! I'm-am-green! La-la-la! Point-y feet! La-la-la!

Buddy is in such shock, he's speechless. A few of the neighbors chuckle.

MRS. SPICER
Oh honey, would you stop? You're being obnoxious.

BUDDY
(touching his bare chest)
What's happening?

This image makes Buddy feel like he's in another dimension. Buddy is seriously disturbed by this.

BUDDY
Where am I?

JOVIE
(to Buddy)
Relax honey, it's just a joke.

BUDDY
Papa Elf made that suit.

MRS. SPICER
Honey, honestly, that's Buddy's suit, now go take it off.

MR. SPICER
OH LOOK, THE LEPRECHAUN FOUND A POT OF GOLD!

JOVIE
Okay, we get it Phil.

MRS. SPICER
C'mon. That's enough.

MR. SPICER
Okay, okay, I'll take it off. BUT FIRST--
(in a troll voice)
-ANSWER ME THESE QUESTIONS THREE!

Suddenly JOVIE reaches out and YANKS MR. SPICER'S FOOT OUT FROM UNDER HIM. He flips to his back and hits his head on the patio.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SUBURBS - MORNING

The sun rises.

INT. SPICER'S HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

SUSIE and the SPICER'S are all having fun, eating pizza.

MR. SPICER
Oh, man. You should have seen your father last night -- He was out of his mind! He's weirder at a regular party than he is when he's insane!

Jess and Jamie laugh their heads off. Susie feels guilty, but she laughs along too.

MR. SPICER
Guys, watch this -- Who am I?

Mr. Spicer walks around with a slice of pizza like an idiot, doing a weird imitation of Buddy.

MR. SPICER
Christmas Christmas Blah blah blah! I don't know what pizza is! I'm from the moon!!!

SFX: The door bell rings.

MRS. SPICER
Okay, that's enough. I'm getting the door.

Mrs. Spicer walks toward the door... And now opens...

REVEAL: IT'S BUDDY.

BUDDY
Hi. I'm here to pick up Susie.

EXT. MR. SPICER'S HOUSE - DAY

Gandolf stands in the yard. Buddy speaks with Susie privately outside.

SUSIE
Would it be okay if I going stayed longer?

BUDDY
Oh. Um, okay.
(beat)
Listen, I'm sorry again about the whole foot rub thing.

SUSIE
Whatever. It's fine.

BUDDY
Maybe you and I could get some dinner later tonight?

SUSIE
We just ate.

BUDDY
Maybe lunch tomorrow?

SUSIE
I have school.

BUDDY
How about after school?

SUSIE
I'm not sure what I'm doing yet.

BUDDY
I sent you twenty five Etcha Sketches. You haven't written back.

SUSIE
Oh, I didn't bring it with me.

BUDDY
You didn't bring it with you?

Buddy is crushed...

SUSIE
Listen Dad, I'm cold. I should go back inside.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DAY

Buddy trudges back to the house, bummed.

PAPA ELF (V.O.)
(narrating)
Despite Buddy's best efforts. He had pushed Susie away and he knew it. This one hurt. And Buddy's heart was, well, broken.

INT. BUDDY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Jovie walks around the empty house, looking for her husband.

JOVIE
Buddy?
(no response)
Buddy, where are you?

POV: Jovie notices the door to the basement is ajar. A light is on downstairs.

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Jovie walks down the creaky stairs, looking for Buddy.

JOVIE
Hello?

JOVIE'S POV: Looking into the shadows, we see the silhouette of something in the corner. She clicks on the light.

REVEAL: BUDDY IS ONCE AGAIN IN HIS ELF COSTUME. HE'S SMEARED WITH CHOCOLATE, SURROUNDED BY CANDY WRAPPERS.

BUDDY
(smeared with chocolate)
I'm a monster.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BUDDY'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Buddy and Jovie are talking over breakfast.

Buddy's in the middle of an impassioned description, using a scroll as a visual aid.

BUDDY
...What she's looking for isn't just normal, it's normal *and cool*. She likes playing dress up and stuff like that.
(re: his schematic drawings)
So watch: Instead of turning it, this new lipstick will pop up when you hit this button. And it will come in four flavors:

We pan to the illustrations as Buddy labels each one.

BUDDY (O.S.)
(as we see the illustrations)
...Suburban Bliss, Suburban Swiss, Suburban Lava and Suburban Infusion. Now, that's *normal <u>and</u> cool*.

JOVIE
Did you just say Suburban Infusion?

BUDDY
You're right, we could make it cooler. What if you could eat it?

Jovie is exasperated.

JOVIE
Hey, can we put the lip-stick schematics down for a second? I'd like to talk to you.

BUDDY
Okay.

JOVIE
So, your publicist called to check in, to make sure you're ready for the show again this year.

BUDDY
I'm ready.

JOVIE
She's going to expect you to wear your Elf suit.
(lifting the Elf suit)
I cleaned it for you, just in case.

Jovie is hoping to see the old Buddy come back.

JOVIE
(hopeful)
The Elf suit looks good on TV, you know.

BUDDY
We'll see.

JOVIE
And your name can't be Brian.

BUDDY
She said that?

JOVIE
No, I said that.

BUDDY
Fine.
(beat)
Did you ask her if Susie can be on set this year?

JOVIE
Yes, I've asked her five times, she's going to be on set, it's all planned.

BUDDY
Good. Susie will think TV is cool, for sure.

JOVIE
Listen, Buddy, I think you might be trying a little too hard with Susie, don't you think?

Buddy knows this is true, but instead of answering, he pencils harder onto the lip-stick schematics.

JOVIE
You know, the most important thing is that you love her, Buddy. As long as she knows that, I think everything will be okay.

WE PUSH IN on Buddy. Jovie's words have struck a chord...

DISSOLVE TO:

BUDDY'S ALL-NIGHTER:

-Buddy looks over all of his pages of text and illustrations...

-ECU TITLE: Koal Kringle and the South Pole Elves.

-Quick cuts of Buddy working ferociously into the night, like only Buddy can.

-As dawn breaks, Buddy finally holds up his completed book, smiling to himself.

INT. PAPA ELF'S HOUSE - NORTH POLE - DAY

Papa Elf speaks to the camera as narrator.

PAPA ELF
Having been inspired by Jovie, Buddy had big plans for his annual television app--

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK. There is a loud knock on the door.

PAPA ELF
(yelling off)
Um... Come back later please!
(to camera)
Sorry about that. I thought I put the do not disturb sign on before I started thi--

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK. Another loud knock on the door.

PAPA ELF
(yelling off)
Yes, I'm trying to tell a story here!
(to camera)
Sorry about that, sometimes Ming Ming can-

KNOCK. KNOCK. KNOCK. The third knock is the loudest yet.

PAPA ELF
This is really embarrassing. Will you excuse me for just a second?

The camera holds as Papa Elf walks over to the door, partially visible at the top of the frame.

PAPA ELF
(as he opens the door)
If you don't mind I'm--

Papa Elf stops speaking, tilting his head upward in shock. Someone or something very large is at the door.

PAPA ELF
(turning to camera)
Okay. Now, this is, um, this is bad.

With that, a BURLAP SACK POUNDS DOWN OVER HIM and sweeps Papa Elf right out the front door.

We've just witnessed our narrator being mysteriously kidnapped. The camera hangs in the empty house for a beat. The door swinging eerily in the wind.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SPICER'S HOUSE - MORNING

Mr. Spicer is watching TV, eating cereal.

ON TV: It's the American Morning show.

TV HOST (V.O.)
(from the TV)
Coming up after this commercial break...

They cut to a shot of Buddy, in his Elf suit, waiting, He's looking up at the lights, then realizes he's on camera and waves at us emphatically with both hands.

TV HOST (V.O.)
Children's' author Buddy Hobbs makes his annual visit, so get ready for an extra helping of Christmas Spirit!

MR. SPICER
(to the TV)
Idiot.
(calling for them)
Jess! Jamie!... Get ready to crack up.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - MORNING

The sun rises over the Manhattan skyline.

INT. TV STUDIO - NEW YORK - CONTINUOUS

A crew hustles around as the commercial plays.

ANGLE ON: JOVIE and SUSIE are on set. Susie looks happy.

SUSIE
This is cool!

JOVIE
Yeah!

ON BUDDY: A Production Assistant is adjusting the microphone clip for Buddy. He gives Susie a thumbs up.

INT. SPICER'S HOUSE / TV STUDIO - INTERCUT

INTERCUT with the studio as the Spicer family surrounds the TV. Jess and Jamie are both on their cell phones, calling everyone in class.

JESS
(into her cell)
Turn on channel four right now!

JAMIE
(into her cell)
Susie's Dad's on TV!

TV HOST
Welcome back. Happy Saturday, America.
(beat)
Boy, Christmas Day is sure sneaking up on us fast this year, isn't it? Well, once again we welcome our favorite children's author, Buddy Hobbs. Tell me, Buddy, where do all of these fantastical ideas come from?

BUDDY
Well, being from the North Pole, I have an advantage over other writers. All I do is take our Elf stories and write them down.

TV HOST
Adorable.

BUDDY
And then when I turn it in to the people, they fix the spelling and what-not.

TV HOST
Ha!

Jovie and Susie look at each other, happy.

SUSIE
(whispering to her Mom)
He's doing pretty good!

Meanwhile, Buddy has his finger in his ear, like a UN translator.

TV HOST
You're not wearing an ear piece, so you can put your finger down, if that makes you more comfortable.

BUDDY
(finger still in ear)
Sorry about that, Julie.

TV HOST
So, I understand we might get a peak at what's in store for us this year?

BUDDY
Well I brought some of the story with me, if you'd like to see it. I did the illustrations myself.

TV HOST
Fantastic.

INTERCUT MULTIPLE SCENES. Another kid from Susie's class hangs up the phone and turns on the TV. Others are already glued to the set.

BUDDY
Now this began as a Christmas adventure, but the more I poured my heart into it, the more it changed. It's become more of an 'ode.'

TV HOST
An ode?

BUDDY
A wise woman once told me: The most important thing is that you love someone. And as long the person knows that, everything will be okay.
(lifting the book)
This year, my book is: 'IT'S A SUSIE, SUSIE CHRISTMAS.'

The cover has a weird illustration of Susie on the front.

ON SUSIE: Instead of being thrilled, she looks petrified.

SUSIE
(to herself)
It's a Susie, Susie Christmas?

ON MR. SPICER:

MR. SPICER
Oh baby, this ought to be good.

BACK ON BUDDY:

BUDDY
It's a Christmas collage along with a collection of all the things that make Susie special to me.

TV HOST
What kind of things make her special?

BUDDY
Let's see, where do I start? She can burp louder than I can. I love that.

Jovie, worried, looks down at Susie. She's horrified.

BUDDY
...Here's a really old picture of her in the bath tub. Just look at that face.

QUICK CUTS OF SUSIE'S FRIENDS WATCHING TV: How embarrassing.

BUDDY
On this page I drew out the three steps it takes to crack Susie's big toe. She's double-jointed like a frog.

ON THE SPICERS: Jess and Jamie hold their hands over their mouths, aghast.

MR. SPICER
Ha! Frog feet!? This is a disaster!

BUDDY
This is my longest book yet, over 450 pages. There's no one like Susie in the whole world. I think this is the best work I've ever done.

Buddy looks off camera at his daughter and smiles. But his smile doesn't last long.

REVEAL: Susie is upset. She runs off, making a racket as she leaves the set.

BUDDY
SUSIE!

TV HOST
Hello?

BUDDY
Oh, um... Sorry. I've got to go.

TV HOST
You're leaving?

Buddy hurries out of frame after Susie, his mic wire yanks over a light.

CREW (O.S.)
Look out!

TV HOST
(gear collapses)
Ow.
(recovering)
We'll be right back, happy Saturday America.

EXT. NEW YORK STUDIOS - DAY

Susie hurries out the door, upset.

BUDDY
Susie! Wait!

Susie stops and faces off with her Dad.

BUDDY
What's wrong?

SUSIE
What's wrong!? You just don't get it, do you?

Buddy wants to speak, but then just shakes his head.

BUDDY
I guess I don't.

SUSIE
All you ever do is make me look like a freak! I can't take it anymore! I don't want an Elf for a Dad! I don't want to go to the North Pole ever again!

Buddy can't believe his ears.

BUDDY
What are you saying?

For Buddy nothing in the world could be worse than this.

SUSIE
Listen, Mr. Spicer invited me to go with Jess and Jamie down to Florida for Christmas. I want to go with them.

With that, SUSIE WALKS OFF...

Buddy turns to see JOVIE standing there, watching.

BUDDY
(to Jovie)
You said if I loved her, everything would be okay.

JOVIE
It will Buddy. It will.

Jovie runs after her daughter.

JOVIE (O.S.)
Susie! Stop!

With that, Buddy is left alone, devastated.

PAPA ELF (V.O.)
(narrating)
Poor Buddy...

EXT. SNOW FIELD - MEANWHILE

Angry wolves sprint, flashing teeth. Koal Kringle's sled rips across the snow.

REVEAL: Papa Elf is held captive, tied securely to the back of a mean-moving dog sled, he bounces along at high speed.

PAPA ELF
(speaking to camera)
...He can get so much more emotional than your average Elf. Me, I was born with the ability to stay calm...

We hear the sound of a whip cracking, and the wolves bark even louder.

PAPA ELF
...Even when I'm, say, strapped to Koal Kringle's, um, evil sled.

KOAL KRINGLE (O.S.)
(cracking his whip)
HI-YA!

INT. BUDDY'S HOUSE - DAY - LATER

Buddy moves down the hallway, scared to go into Susie's room, practicing in his head what he wants to say.

Finally, he knocks and opens the door.

BUDDY
Susie? It's me, your Dad. Listen, I'm sorry, I brought you...

REVEAL: Susie's room is empty.

BUDDY
(deflated)
...a penguin.

REVEAL: Buddy lifts up a REAL LIVE PENGUIN INTO FRAME. The Penguin jumps out of his arms and waddles into the bedroom.

The camera catches Jovie's feet and we pan up.

JOVIE
(holding the book)
Your book is beautiful, Buddy.
(Buddy looks down, ashamed)
I read every single page. You were right. It is your best work.

Buddy looks up. Jovie is moved.

Buddy is happy to have pleased Jovie, but he's much more concerned with Susie right now.

BUDDY
Does she still want to go to Florida?

JOVIE
I don't care what she wants. She's walking up to the North Pole with us, if we have to drag her by the ear.

BUDDY
I'm sorry I ruined our whole family.

JOVIE
Oh Buddy, it's not your fault. You're a good father.

Buddy slumps over and walks down the stairs.

JOVIE
(calling after him)
She's just upset right now, Buddy. Where are you going?
(as Buddy leaves)
IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT!

EXT. BUDDY'S HOUSE - DAY

Buddy walks off, upset. The squirrel happens to be standing near by, facing away from Buddy.

BUDDY
(upset, to the squirrel)
Not right now, Jason. We'll play some other time, okay?

Buddy walks off... devastated...

VOICE (O.S.)
Pssst.

Buddy heard something. But where did it come from?

VOICE (O.S.)
Buddy. Over here.

Buddy turns to see LEON THE SNOWMAN (the animated character from first movie).

BUDDY
LEON!!! IS THAT YOU!!???

Buddy gives Leon a big hug.

LEON THE SNOWMAN
It's me all right. Ha ha! Oh Buddy, it's so good to see you!

CUT TO:

INT. BUDDY'S BACK YARD - LATER

LEON THE SNOWMAN is now sitting with BUDDY AND JOVIE on the back porch. Jovie fills Leon's frosty mug.

LEON THE SNOWMAN
(re: his frosty drink)
Thanks Jovie...
(continuing)
...And after that, I dissolved into a cumulus cloud and used the wind currents to guide me through the sky, until I reached your town.

BUDDY
Wow.
(analyzing the logistics)
Really?

LEON THE SNOWMAN
Yep. Once I looked down and saw your house, I snow-flaked myself down into your yard, rolled myself up and here I am.

JOVIE
That sounds kind of complicated.

LEON THE SNOWMAN
Hey, when Santa sends you on a mission, you do what it takes.

JOVIE
A mission?

BUDDY
Are you going to help us with Susie?

LEON THE SNOWMAN
Listen, we've got an emergency up North. The South Pole elves have really hit us where it hurts this year. Santa has sent for you, Buddy. We need your help.

Buddy thinks about this -- He's being torn apart inside.

BUDDY
I can't do it.

Leon is surprised. He leans in and speaks seriously.

LEON THE SNOWMAN
Santa needs you now, Buddy.

BUDDY
No!

Buddy stands up, angry. He kicks over a hobby horse and looks out over the yard.

BUDDY
(looking out at the suburbs)
My place is here now. My daughter needs me to be normal. I'm no longer an Elf.

LEON THE SNOWMAN
You don't mean that.

JOVIE
Buddy, let's hear Leon out.

BUDDY
No! I'm not Buddy.
(turning back, epic)
My name is Brian Hobbs.

PAPA ELF (V.O.)
(narration)
But there's one thing that Leon hadn't told Buddy, or, Brian yet.

INT. SOUTH POLE DUNGEON - MEANWHILE

Papa Elf is being held captive in a South Pole dungeon.

PAPA ELF
...As you know, I had, well, been kidnapped. Buddy was upset to hear this, of course. But, to be perfectly honest, I wasn't too crazy about the situation myself.
(looking off screen)
Hmm?... Oh, sure.
(to camera)
If you'll excuse me, I, um, well, it's time for me to be interrogated.

SUDDENLY A BRIGHT LIGHT SHINES IN PAPA ELF'S FACE.

PAPA ELF'S POV: Blinding light. We can't make out the evil Koal Kringle, he's only a dark shadow moving around.

KOAL KRINGLE'S VOICE (O.S)
(speaking from the shadows)
Make things easy on yourself, or it could be a long day for YOU!! Give your magic to me now, or be tortured 'til you DO!!

INT. BUDDY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Buddy is devastated at the news.

BUDDY
Papa Elf?

LEON
I'm sorry Buddy.

Subdued, Leon hands over an envelope. ECU: It's an airline ticket.

BUDDY
What is this?

JOVIE
(reading)
It's an airline ticket.

BUDDY
You can't fly to the North Pole, Leon. You have to walk.

LEON THE SNOWMAN
You're not going to the North Pole, Buddy.

BUDDY
Where am I going?

JOVIE
(looking up)
Switzerland.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SUSIE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Susie pushes her bedroom door open.

ANGLE ON: Laying on Susie's bed, is a scroll. She walks to the bed and opens it.

BUDDY (V.O.)
(narrating letter)
Dear Susie, I'm super sorry that I totally ruined your life forever. And I'm sorry your friends hate me.

MONTAGE 'BUDDY GOES TO SWITZERLAND'

-An airplane tears through the sky.

BUDDY (V.O.)
...I've left, to take care of some top secret Christmas business. I figure, if I can't be a good Dad, the least I can do is be a good son.

-Buddy walks alone and sad, leaving a European airport, passing a sign that says Switzerland. The Elf suit is on.

BUDDY (V.O.)
I know it's a long walk up North...

-Buddy, following a map, walks over a grassy knoll. A top secret Christmas spy pops out from behind a tree. It's clear he's there to escort Buddy somewhere important...

BUDDY (V.O.)
But I'll be waiting for you, at the pole--

-Buddy and the Christmas spy approach an old wooden door. The Christmas spy does a special knock. The door opens and they enter a small wooden room, the Christmas spy leaves, making Buddy wait in the room alone.

EXT. BUDDY'S HOUSE - LATER

A trek to the North Pole: Jovie and her daughter are dressed in their Elf suits, walking through a snowfield. Each carries a bundle tied to a stick.

BUDDY (V.O.)
(narrating letter)
And I'll be ready to give you a big hug on Christmas Eve. Love... Brian-slash-Dad.

Jovie sets the pace. Susie shuffles along behind. She is clearly not happy to be walking North.

SUSIE
(re: Her Elf suit)
I feel like a green hobo in this thing.

JOVIE
Papa Elf made you that suit. You'll wear it with pride.

SUSIE
Well do I have to be proud of these shoes? My feet kill.

JOVIE
So do mine.

SUSIE
What is top 'secret christmas business' anyway?

JOVIE
That's not for you to know. It's top secret.

SUSIE
Right. He probably has to *eat a candy cane.*

This stops Jovie in her tracks.

JOVIE
THAT'S ENOUGH.

This scolding rattles Susie's cage. She has no idea how worried Jovie is.

SUSIE
Alright. Jeez. Sorry.

INT. SECRET WOODEN ROOM - MEANWHILE

Buddy waits by himself in this wooden room. He walks around confused, but curious...

BUDDY
(curious, to himself)
So... The hidden Christmas room...

He picks up a figurine. Now he DROPS AND BREAKS IT. He looks around, picks up the pieces and then tries to shove them into a drawer.

VOICE (O.S.)
Buddy.

Buddy thinks he's busted at first, but his expression immediately changes.

BUDDY
Santa?
(beat)
IT'S YOU!

Santa and Buddy give each other a big bear hug.

SANTA
(jolly as they hug)
Okay, okay, Buddy! Santa's gotta breathe.

BUDDY
What's happening? Why are we in Switzerland?

SANTA
Buddy, we need to talk. Why don't you sit down.

BUDDY
Okay.

SANTA
There's something you should know. I haven't always been honest with you over the years.

BUDDY
What do you mean? I thought Santa could never tell a lie.

SANTA
That's elves. Elves can never tell a lie. Me, I can lie whenever I feel like it. I try not to, but it happens.

BUDDY
Oh. Okay.

SANTA
(this is difficult)
Listen, um... I...

BUDDY
What is it?

SANTA
I'm not the only Santa Claus in the world, Buddy.

BUDDY
What are you talking about? You *are* Santa Claus.

SANTA
America isn't the only country in the world. People around the globe celebrate different things in different ways. Christmas isn't all about *me.*

BUDDY
What are you saying?

Instead of answering, Santa turns, reaches over and twists a goblet. THE WALL OPENS behind Buddy --

SANTA
Follow me, Buddy.
(with a smile)
Just follow me...

REVEAL: A HUGE ROOM SIMILAR TO THE UNITED NATIONS.

A HUGE CREST READS 'THE SUMMIT OF SANTAS'

SITTING AROUND A GIANT CIRCULAR TABLE ARE ALL SORTS OF SANTA CLAUSES FROM DIFFERENT REGIONS OF THE WORLD. A LITTLE PLAQUE TELLS US WHERE EACH SANTA IS FROM.

BUDDY WANDERS IN FRONT OF ALL THE SANTAS LIKE A ZOMBIE.

SANTA CLAUS
See Buddy, Santa isn't the only, well, Santa. Every country has their own. And each Santa has his own style.

Some of the Santas introduce themselves.

NETHERLANDS SANTA
Hi Buddy. I'm St. Nick of the Netherlands...

EXT. THE NETHERLANDS - FLASHBACK

NETHERLANDS SANTA (Think Vince Vaughn) wears the cap of a bishop and rides in a boat.

NETHERLANDS SANTA (V.O.)
...I live in Spain. I wear the cap of a Bishop and travel by boat to Holland to put candy in shoes.

EXT. ICELAND - FLASHBACK

A team of tiny green Christmas Goblins are doing their thing.

ICELANDIC GOBLIN (V.O.)
We're the Icelandic Christmas Goblins. We lay treats on windowsills.

EXT. SWEEDEN - FLASHBACK

Under the floorboards, a Tomte lays flat. (think Owen Wilson).

SWEDISH SANTA (V.O.)
I'm the Swedish gift-bearing Tomte. I live under the floorboards and then deliver Christmas porridge.

EXT. RWANDA - FLASHBACK

The SANTA OF RWANDA lifts a mug of banana beer, toasting (Think Dr. Dre).

SANTA OF RWANDA (V.O.)
In Rwanda, Christmas is a three day event where children dance and...

INT. THE SUMMIT OF SANTAS - CONTINUOUS

SANTA OF RWANDA
...Feast on goat meat and drink banana beer.

Santa of Rwanda smiles, but Buddy is feeling dizzy.

BUDDY
This has to be a dream.

SANTA
It's no dream buddy. But it *is* magic.

[Writer's note: These Christmas traditions are all true. The idea is to have fun with this, but also be accurate and respect the different celebrations of peace and love that occur around the world.]

JULEMAND OF DENMARK begins to take a roll call (think Bill Clinton). We pan across the Summit Of Santas, as each member acknowledges his name.

JULEMAND OF DENMARK (O.S.)
Before we begin, I'd like to thank each Santa for making this journey.
(introducing as we pan)
Father Christmas of Antigua. Santa Claus of Australia. Sankt Nikolas (Austria). Archangel Gabrial. Papa Pasku (Bonaire). Papai Noel (Brazil). Gandpa Koleda (Bulgaria). Generous Pho Pho (Burma). Santa of Canada. Viejo Pascuero (Chile). Shengdan Laoren (China). Magi of Columbia. St. Lucy (Croatia). St. Basil (Cyprus). Svaty Mikalas (Czech Republic). Santa of England. Declerator of Peace (Estonia). Joulupukki (Finland). Père Noël (France). Knecht Ruprecht (Germany). Agios Vailios (Greece). Ton-Ton Noël (Haiti). Mikulàs (Hungry). Father Christmas of Ireland. La Befana (Italy). Magi of Iran. Magi of Iraq. Father Christmas of India. Jamaican Santa. Hoteiosho (Japan). Baba Noël (Jordan). Kalodu Senellis (Lithuania). Father Christmas of Malta. Bonhomme Noel (Mauritius), The Wise Men (Mexico), Mos Craciun (Moldova), Tsai Sen Yeh (Mongolia), St. Nick of the Netherlands, New Zealand Santa, Julesvenn & Julenisse (Norway), Father of Bara Din (Pakistan). Local Saints (Philippines), Star Man (Poland), Pai Natal (Portugal), Magi of Puerto Rico, Father Christmas of Romania, D'yed Moroz (Russia), Santa of Saba, First Footer (Scotland), Dedt Moroz (Siberia), Father Christmas of South Africa, Los Reyes Magos (Spain), Natal Seeya (Sri Lanka), Goedoe Pa (Suriname), Babe Khisimusi (Switzerland), Samichlaus (Sweden), Noel Baba (Turkey), Santa Claus of the United States of America... And Father Christmas of Wales...

A little trumpeter plays the official commencement honk.

JULEMAND OF DENMARK
Welcome one and all!

ON BUDDY. HE PASSES OUT, CRUSHING THE TRUMPETER.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SUMMIT OF SANTAS - MEANWHILE

The Santas are debating this emergency. Buddy and Santa watch the proceedings, Buddy is back up, looking healthy.

NETHELANDS SANTA
Koal Kringle must be stopped, once and for all.

SANTA OF RWANDA
We must get Papa Elf back safe, at all costs.

SWEDISH SANTA
This is the greatest emergency our American Santa has ever faced.

JULEMAND OF DENMARK
Buddy Hobbs, please approach the council.

Buddy looks around, scared.

SANTA
Go on, Buddy. It's okay.

Buddy walks into the center of the Santas and stands before them, somber.

JULEMAND OF DENMARK (O.S.)
As you know, without Papa Elf, Christmas in America could be lost forever.

PAPA ELF (V.O.)
(narrating)
What he was getting at was, that, I, well, I'm kind of important when it comes to delivering presents. I'm not just in charge of the sleigh...

EXT. SOUTH POLE SNOWBANK - DAY

The sleigh has been stolen.

PAPA ELF
...Which Koal Kringle also happened to kidnap, by the way...
(beat)
But I have another very important job before Christmas...

EXT. NORTH POLE - CHRISTMAS EVE - WOODS - FLASHBACK

A giant TOWER OF PRESENTS for every kid in America is stacked in the woods, next to Santa's sack.

Obviously, THE SACK IS MUCH TOO SMALL for the presents.

PAPA ELF (V.O.)
...Every year our factory turns out millions of presents for millions of children. And with just one sack to carry them all, well, you can do the math. I sort of, well...

We see Papa Elf demonstrate his power: He takes a present, holds it over the sack and it DISSOLVES INTO RED DUST, FALLING INTO THE SACK.

PAPA ELF (V.O.)
(as it dissolves)
...I go off into the woods, to the clearing of Ashwood, and I take each present...

INT. HOUSE - CHRISTMAS NIGHT - FLASHBACK

Now in a child's home, Santa reaches into his sack. Some of the Elf dust magically returns to the form of a present.

PAPA ELF (V.O.)
And make sure it fits into Santa's sack.

Santa pulls out a gift and sticks it under the tree.

INT. SOUTH POLE DUNGEON - MEANWHILE

Papa Elf speaks to camera.

PAPA ELF
Turning gifts into Elf dust, and making sure the dust turns back into the right presents for the right kids, well--

THE CAMERA SUDDENLY PULLS BACK AND <u>SPINS 180 DEGREES</u>--

REVEAL: PAPA ELF IS <u>DANGLING UPSIDE DOWN</u>. HE'S BEEN TALKING WHILE HANGING FROM ANKLE SHACKLES.

PAPA ELF
--That's sort of 'what I do'.

PULL BACK FURTHER TO REVEAL: Tiny upside-down Papa Elf is guarded by two really BIG SOUTH POLE ELVES.

YUCK, the canary, lands on the sole of Papa Elf's shoe and whistles a sad song.

INT. THE SUMMIT OF SANTAS - CONTINUOUS

Julemand of Denmark hands Buddy a scroll. Buddy slides it open to find a map of South Pole tunnels.

BUDDY
What's this?

JULEMAND OF DENMARK
We've been able to track Papa Elf's movement. This is a map of the tunnels we think he's been taken through.

BUDDY
Oh.

JULEMAND OF DENMARK
Buddy, your mission is to infiltrate the world of the South Pole Elves and bring Papa Elf back in time for Christmas.

BUDDY
Christmas is in two days. Are you sure you want me to be, you know, in charge?

SANTA OF THE NETHERLANDS
Actually, you were, like, our last choice.
(to the others)
I'm just being honest.

SANTA OF RWANDA
But he's the only one who has a chance.

BUDDY
Why me?

SWEDISH SANTA
Because, you're the only one who looks like them.

BUDDY
But, the South pole elves are tiny.

All of the Santas look at each other. What is he talking about? Santa speaks up.

SANTA
Ahem, Um... That's another thing I lied about, Buddy. See, you were so big, I never wanted you to think you were a *South Pole* Elf, so...

SWEDISH SANTA
The truth is, the South Pole Elves are all Six three with curly hair.

Buddy is shocked.

SANTA OF THE NETHERLANDS
Do you know any other elves who are six three with curly hair?

BUDDY
No.

SANTA OF THE NETHERLANDS
There you go.

SANTA OF RWANDA
Just remember. No laughing.

BUDDY
(with a smile)
Okay.

JULEMAND OF DENMARK
There's one problem. Your Santa's sleigh is gone. None of our flying machines, boats, carriages or gondolas can get you far enough South to reach Koal Kringle.
(beat)
Does anyone have any ideas?

Everyone thinks, but there are only blank faces.

JULEMAND OF DENMARK
Anyone?

This brainstorming is not going well. Silence.

INT. SOUTH POLE - DUNGEON - MEANWHILE

REVEAL: Papa Elf is strapped to a hand-truck with wheels. It's like a funny version of the 'mask scene' in Silence of the Lambs.

PAPA ELF
(narrating through iron mask)
To be honest, I was sort of hoping that brain storming session might go a little bit better.
(cough)

A big South Pole Elf starts wheeling little Papa Elf out of the dungeon cell.

PAPA ELF
(as he's wheeled away)
But hey, what are you going to do.

INT. SUMMIT OF SANTAS - CONTINUOUS

The Santas are still brainstorming...

SANTA OF THE NETHERLANDS
Can he dissolve into a cumulus cloud and use the wind currents to guide him through the sky?

Everyone gives the Santa of the Netherlands a look.

SANTA OF RWANDA
He's *human*.

SANTA OF THE NETHERLANDS
Alright, relax, I'm just spitballing here.

Now, Buddy raises his hand.

JULEMAND OF DENMARK
Yes Buddy?

BUDDY
I just thought of someone. Maybe they can help.

JULEMAND OF DENMARK
Who?

CUT TO:

EXT. MR. SPICER'S TIME SHARE - PRIVATE BEACH - DAY

The hot Florida sun fills the lens, we tilt down to MR. SPICER, grilling out. He wears a Hawaiian shirt with a thick dab of white sun screen on his nose.

He's twisting the lyrics of Van Morrison's 'Gloria.'

MR. SPICER
(to the tune of 'Gloria')
Flooooooooorida! F-L-O-R-I-D-A.
Flooooooooooorida!

Jess does a cannon ball off the diving board and splashes Jamie. Mrs. Spicer sips an umbrella drink.

EXT. CANDY CANE FOREST - LATER - NIGHT

Jovie and Susie shiver near a camp fire, Roasting hot dogs on sticks.

JOVIE
(trying to lighten the mood)
Not quite as warm as Florida, huh?

SUSIE
No.
(beat)
I'm sure Jess and Jamie will never invite me down there again.

JOVIE
You have nothing to be ashamed of.

SUSIE
Are you kidding? You saw what happened. Everyone's going to think I'm the biggest weirdo ever.

JOVIE
I've got news for you: Everyone in the world is a weirdo. Your friends may try to pretend like they aren't. But they are.

SUSIE
How do you know?

JOVIE
Because they're human.
(beat)
I know you're upset with your father. Just try to understand, he did it because he loves you.

SUSIE
I just want him to act like a real Dad. That's all.

JOVIE
You don't get it, Susie. Buddy already is a 'real Dad.'

SUSIE
Well, no one else thinks so.

JOVIE
Let me tell you something about your father. He's a man that you and I will be able to count on, always. In fact, he has made it his mission in life to make you and I happy. And everything he gives us is a gift, nothing more. He asks for nothing in return.
(beat)
That's what a real Dad is Susie. None of that other stuff matters.

Susie's eyes are welling up.

JOVIE
When it comes to loving his family, you might have the best Dad there ever was.

Susie notices that Jovie's eyes are welling up too. She sees something in her Mother's face that isn't right.

SUSIE
Dad's in trouble, isn't he.

Jovie doesn't answer.

JOVIE
Finish your food. We need to keep walking.

EXT. FLORIDA BEACH - MEANWHILE

LONG LENS: Buddy is walking, in his Elf suit, through a crowded beach toward camera. This is a crazy image, Buddy struggling through the hot sand.

ON BUDDY: He's sweating like crazy, almost passing out from heat exhaustion. He goes up to some girls in Bikinis.

BUDDY
Do you know Phil Spicer?

The girls just crack up at this weirdo. Buddy presses on.

BUDDY
(calling out, desperate)
PHIL!

Buddy's pointy shoes flick sand into a lady's eye.

BUDDY
(calling out)
DOES ANYONE KNOW A PHIL SPICER?

A local teenage surfer hears this.

TEENAGER
HEY. Who wants to know?

BUDDY
Me. I'm Buddy.

TEENAGER
Well, you can tell Mr. SpaZer that no one owns those tasty waves of his. And I plan to be surfing on his *'private beach'* tomorrow morning.
(beat)
He lives right on the other side of that wall, where the tube starts.

Sincerely moved, Buddy puts his hand on the kid's shoulder, like a knight.

BUDDY
I and two hundred Santas thank you.

EXT. MR. SPICER'S TIME SHARE - DAY

As Buddy walks toward the time share, Jess and Jamie and Mrs. Spicer leave to go shopping. Buddy hides as they pass him.

EXT. MR. SPICER'S TIME SHARE - PRIVATE BEACH - DAY

Mr. Spicer and Buddy sit in beach chairs.

MR. SPICER
And so it's Daddy Elf who's living in the dungeon?

BUDDY
Papa Elf.

Mr. Spicer nods, as if taking this seriously.

MR. SPICER
So, did you grow up in a dungeon?

BUDDY
No, I told you, I grew up in the North Pole. We don't have dungeons, Koal Kringle has the dungeon.

MR. SPICER
I already gave this story two thumbs down, remember?

BUDDY
I know it might sound strange, but it's all true. I swear. Do you *believe?*

MR. SPICER
I believe.
(beat)
That you are one hundred percent BONKERS.
(standing up)
I'm afraid you've written one too many Christmas books, my friend.

Mr. Spicer turns and we REVEAL:

LEON THE SNOWMAN, animated, is standing there.

LEON THE SNOWMAN
C'mon Phil, try to have an open mind.

Mr. Spicer stands frozen, petrified.

BUDDY
(introducing them)
Phil Spicer, Leon The Snowman. Leon The Snowman, Phil Spicer.

LEON THE SNOWMAN
Everything Buddy said is true, Phil.

MR. SPICER
(freaking, to himself)
Sun stroke. I'm having a sun stroke.

Mr. Spicer turns away but is stopped by the sight of some ANIMATED ARCTIC PUFFINS.

ARCTIC PUFFINS
It's not sun stroke, Phil. Santa Claus is real. We're all real.

Mr. Spicer holds his brain and tries to escape, stumbling toward the ocean.

MR. SPICER
(to himself)
Just breathe... You ate a bad skirt steak, that's all...

SUDDENLY THE WATER QUAKES AND MR. NORWALL, THE ANIMATED WHALE FROM THE FIRST MOVIE RISES UP OUT OF THE WATER.

MR. NORWALL THE WHALE
Hey guys.

BUDDY
Hey Mr. Norwall.

THIS IS JUST TOO MUCH, MR. SPICER LOSES IT.

MR. SPICER
AAAHHH!!!!

MR. SPICER SCRAMBLES BACKWARDS, FALLING IN THE SAND.

MR. NORWALL THE WHALE
I'm sorry if I'm scary.

CUT TO:

INT. MR. SPICER'S TIME SHARE - LATER

Mr. Spicer sits, stunned, on the couch.

REVEAL: LEON THE SNOWMAN AND THE ARCTIC PUFFINS ARE ALL INSIDE THE CONDO.

LEON THE SNOWMAN
Would you mind if I turned the thermostat down?

MR. SPICER
(in shock)
Go for it.

Leon leaves frame. Buddy and the other animated animals sit staring at Mr. Spicer for a long beat.

MR. SPICER
So... The south Pole?

BUDDY
You said you go to Antarctica, for work. Two flights and then that special helicopter with two blades... Once we land I can just walk from there.

An ARCTIC PUFFIN waddles over and hands Mr. Spicer a glass of water.

ARCTIC PUFFIN
Here's another glass of water, Phil.

Phil says nothing, but sips the water.

BUDDY
Santa promised to put you on the nice list for life. You'd be a made man.
(full of hope)
Will you get me to Antarctica?

MR. SPICER
You know what I'm going to do? I'm going to go sleep this off.

LEON & THE PUFFINS
Oh come on, please...

Mr. Spicer stands up and starts to walk back to the bedroom.

Buddy suddenly dives over and grabs Mr. Spicer's leg tight, getting dragged as he begs, super emotional.

BUDDY
NO! PLEASE! I'LL DO ANYTHING!

MR. SPICER
LET GO!

BUDDY
(suddenly rapid fire)
I'll vacuum your car.

MR. SPICER
(rapid fire)
No.

BUDDY
I'll paint your garage.

MR. SPICER
No.

BUDDY
I'll give you a hundred dollars.

MR. SPICER
Quit breathing on my Dockers. The answer is no.

Mr. Spicer looks down at the Elf that's clinging to his leg. Buddy is breathing really hard.

EXT. MR. SPICER'S CONDO - DAY

The garage door lifts up dramatically.

Mr. Spicer is at the wheel of his SUV. Buddy is in the passenger seat. They are departing on this mission.

Buddy is smiling really big at Mr. Spicer.

MR. SPICER
Don't get too excited. Remember, I still hate you.

BUDDY
Okay.

The SUV drives off.

EXT. SKY - DAY

An airplane tears across the sky.

EXT. MOUNTAIN TOP - DAY

Over a wide shot of a mountain top, we hear Susie talking into the thin air, almost like a Christmas wish, she writes an Etcha-Sketch.

SUSIE (O.S.)
(as she writes)
I'm sorry Dad. Please forgive me. I love you. Let us know you're okay. Love, Susie.

ANGLE ON Susie. She sends the Etcha-Sketch message, then looks out into the sky.

EXT. SKY - DAY

A double-bladed helicopter flies over Antarctica.

INT. HELICOPTER - CONTINUOUS

This is a frigid industrial chopper. Mr. Spicer leans forward and speaks to the pilots over the noise.

MR. SPICER
(over the noise)
JUST MY LUCK, HUH? A DRILL RIG HAS A PRESSURE LOSS RIGHT ON CHRISTMAS EVE.

HELICOPTER PILOT
(commiserating)
HEY, AT LEAST IT WILL BE A WHITE CHRISTMAS, RIGHT?

Mr. Spicer chuckles, then leans back and looks at Buddy. Buddy is smiling really big.

BUDDY
I love you.

Mr. Spicer stares at Buddy for a moment, then SUDDENLY SMACKS BUDDY IN THE HEAD REALLY HARD, BUDDY'S FOREHEAD BOUNCES OFF THE WINDOW.

BUDDY
Ow.

EXT. ANTARCTICA DRILLING STATION - DAY

The helicopter lands. Buddy and Mr. Spicer hop out. Mr. Spicer is freezing.

BUDDY
I better leave.

MR. SPICER
Good idea.

Before Mr. Spicer can fend it off, Buddy HUGS HIM TIGHT. It's a big bear hug that Mr. Spicer can't wrangle himself out of. Finally, Buddy lets go.

MR. SPICER
I hope you freeze to death.

BUDDY
I get it, Sarcasm!

This was not sarcasm. But Buddy walks off, laughing, heading into the great white unknown.

EXT. CANDY CANE FOREST - DAY

Jovie and Susie are walking through the candy cane forest. Susie checks her Etcha Sketch.

ECU: YOU HAVE NO NEW ETCHA-SKETCHES.

EXT. ANTARCTICA - LATER

Buddy walks through a storm, fighting the wind. Checking his location on his map. In the distance, he sees it:

POV: We see the South Pole. The smoke of Koal Kringle's lair rises up into sky, off in the distance.

EXT. SOUTH POLE - DAY

Buddy arrives. Above ground, the place is empty. The danger is below.

Buddy sees the sleigh. It's ditched against a snow bank. All of Santa's reindeer are chained up, standing around, very calm. (These are real animals, not animated).

BUDDY
(to the peaceful reindeer)
Hey Donner! Hey Blitzen! It's me, Buddy! NOBODY PANIC!!! Just stay chained up and keep licking the snow. I'll get us out of here.

Buddy looks around for the best way to enter the underground lair.

There are two doors. The map provides no answer.

BUDDY
(again to the reindeer)
What do you guys think? Door number two?
(no response)
Don't look at me like that, Comet. Everything's going to be fine.

Buddy enters door #2.

INT. ROOM - DAY

IT'S PITCH BLACK.

BUDDY
(in absolute darkness)
Hello?

WE HEAR Buddy fumble for a light switch or something. Finally, he turns on a light.

REVEAL: THE EIGHT ANGRY WOLVES STARE BACK AT HIM. WUPS.

BUDDY
Sorry guys, I was just--

EXT. THE DOOR - DAY

A SHOT OF THE DOOR AS WE HEAR THE·COMMOTION INSIDE. THE DOGS BARK LIKE CRAZY.

Now Buddy is able to make it back outside -- Trying to close the door -- The butt of his suit is bitten off.

BUDDY
(to the wolves)
Bye! I'll talk to you guys later!

Now he opens door #1: Some stairs lead down.

BUDDY
(checking map)
Stairs. Okay, stairs are good.

Buddy swallows hard and enters down into the scary world of Koal Kringle...

MUSIC CUE: A haunting version of 'GREENSLEEVES' is being whistled...

SERIES OF SHOTS: 'BUDDY HUNTS FOR PAPA ELF'

CLOSE ON YUCK: The black canary, he's whistling.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL: A dark, dusty underworld. A maze of tunnels. It's just like what we've seen with our visits with Papa Elf, but much more intense and cool.

THE ELVES: Coal miner elves chop at the walls with pick axes. These guys are definitely sad. And they're all 6'3". It's ridiculous how much they look like Buddy.

IN A TUNNEL: Two South Pole Elves walk past a door.

IN COSTUME: The DOOR OPENS. Buddy peeks out, shows his clean face, then steps out, dressed in overalls, looking the part. He grabs some dirt and rubs it on his forehead.

MINGLING: Buddy bumps into workers. He chops at the wall a little, but then Sneaks off, following his map.

CLIMBING DOWN THE STAIRS: Buddy sees the bars of the dungeon. His map worked!

BUDDY
(ecstatic)
Papa Elf!!!

DOLLY TO REVEAL: The dungeon is empty.

BUDDY
(let down, confused)
Papa Elf?

VOICE (O.S.)
HEY!

Buddy looks off screen, frightened.

POV: It looks like a South Pole Elf has busted him.

SOUTH POLE DUNGEON ELF
(sad and mad)
It's food eating time.

BUDDY
(trying to sound sad)
Yes sir.

The tiny Etcha-Sketch is sticking out of Buddy's breast pocket.

SOUTH POLE DUNGEON ELF
What is that in your pocket?

BUDDY
Oh, this? I just found this... On the ground.

Buddy, trying to cover for himself, tosses the Etcha Sketch to the floor.

BUDDY
I picked it up so I could smash it later. Toys are bad.

The South Pole Elf hands Buddy his ax. Stuck in his role as a bad Elf, Buddy takes the pick ax and looks down at the only connection to his daughter.

The South Pole Elf is still waiting. Buddy has no choice. BUDDY SWINGS THE AX AND SMASHES THE ETCHA SKETCH TO BITS.

SOUTH POLE DUNGEON ELF
(mumbling with approval)
It's sauerkraut time.

Buddy looks down at the shattered pieces... Then follows the South Pole Elf...

INT. PAPA ELF - MEANWHILE

Now shackled to a board, Papa Elf's legs and arms are spread eagle. He's lifted into the air and suspended out over something... Light from flames flicker from below.

PAPA ELF
(speaking to camera)
I'm not blaming anybody, but I was sort of hoping this 'saving me' thing might happen a little faster. Right now, the end of this story doesn't look so good. So far it looks like...
(looking down)
Like I get lowered into a fiery, um, a fiery pit...

For the first time, we see REAL FEAR in Papa's face.

PAPA ELF
(sweating, scared)
...Not my best Christmas Eve.

EXT. NORTH POLE - WOODS - MEANWHILE

TOWERS OF PRESENTS are stacked in the woods, waiting silently in the clearing of Ashwood. Santa's sack lays next to them, waiting for Papa Elf to do his magic.

EXT. NORTH POLE - NIGHT

SANTA AND HIS ELVES have a grim look about them, standing at the edge of the ice, looking out over the water and up into the night sky. Santa checks his watch.

PAN DOWN TO SUSIE: She's looking up, cute.

SUSIE
Where's my Dad, Santa?

SANTA
Don't worry Susie, Buddy's on his way. I sent him, ahem, out to buy more wrapping paper.

SUSIE
Yeah, right, *wrapping paper.*

MR. NORWALL ERUPTS OUT OF THE WATER NEXT TO THEM.

MR. NORWALL THE WHALE
Santa sent Buddy to the most dangerous place in the world.

SANTA
Mr. Norwall! Please!

MR. NORWALL THE WHALE
Sorry. Bye Susie.

Susie checks her Etcha-Sketch for the millionth time.

SUSIE
Wait, everyone, I've got a new message from my Dad!

Everyone gathers around, excited. Susie opens it...

ECU: THE IMAGE ON HER SCREEN IS OF A SMASHED, CRACKED PLASTIC SCREEN.

SUSIE
Oh no.
(looking up at everyone)
His Etcha-Sketch is smashed.

SANTA
Well that's it, he's a goner.
(catching himself)
I mean, I'm sure he's fine.

Everyone looks back out over the horizon.

INT. SOUTH POLE - DINING HALL - LATER

This dining hall is big and pretty cool, as far as evil lairs go, with big-thick lumberjack tables. South Pole elves sip out of big mugs.

Buddy is next to some other Elves, following their lead. He looks around, scared.

A South Pole Elf dumps a giant scoop of sauerkraut into Buddy's bowl. Then adds a bunch of sauce...

SOUTH POLE SERVER
(pouring onto Buddy's food)
Extra sour sauce tonight.

Buddy nods, then takes a BIG BITE OF HIS SOUR FOOD. Buddy tries, with all his might, NOT TO MAKE A FACE.

No one speaks or smiles. It's pretty weird. Buddy fights off the bad taste with some coal tea, but this is worse.

ON the South Pole Elf across from Buddy. Out of the rafters, some of Yuck's BIRD DROPPING land on the South Pole Elf's shoulder. He stares at it with no emotion.

Buddy spots this and starts to laugh -- but he catches himself. Now he tries with all of his might to hold it in. But he's dying. He's like a kid in Church, face turning red. The South Pole Elf tries to clean it, but rubbing it only makes it worse. Now he's hit with another dropping on the other shoulder. He stares at it blankly.

Buddy is dying inside. Tears are streaming down his face.

KOAL KRINGLE (O.S.)
Merry Christmas Eve!! We've done well this year, Indeed!!

Buddy looks off camera in fear.

FOR THE FIRST TIME, KOAL KRINGLE TURNS TOWARD CAMERA, WITH A SMILE.

REVEAL: KOAL KRINGLE IS **CLAYMATION.**

Koal is very charismatic for an animated claymation character. He speaks with loads of style, throwing in a RHYME or two when he feels like it.

He speaks from a dusty stage, flames raise up behind him.

KOAL KRINGLE
Tomorrow, thanks to YOU!! Children will wake up to exactly *zero* presents. Boo hoo HOO!!

Koal Kringle does a little dance along with his rhyme, marching around...

ON BUDDY: He looks at Koal Kringle, frightened.

KOAL KRINGLE
(twirling a pick ax)
Without Papa Elf, Santa is nothing but a fat old FOOL!! And every Christmas letter will be answered... With fossil FUEL!!

Koal Kringle suddenly chops at the wall with an ax. Chunks of coal fly everywhere.

The crowd reacts with SAD MUMBLINGS. This is apparently a South Pole version of applause.

BUDDY
(pretending to be psyched)
YES!
(catching on)
I mean--
(makes mumbling sounds)

KOAL KRINGLE
(dancing to the rhyme)
Oh, why be such a downer, Koal Kringle, what's Christmas done to YOU?! Well, I'll tell you, it's done plenty, and now Santa Claus is THROUGH!!
(marching around)
See, birthdays are special and Christmas is TOO!! But if your birthday is on Christmas, well then it's just too bad for YOU!!
(throwing in some jazz hands)
See, everyone gets a special day. Almost everyone, that IS!! I don't have a special day, because Santa made mine HIS!!

SQUALID, a South Pole Lieutenant, offers a gift.

SQUALID
A birthday present for you, Koal Kringle.
(offering a present)
This is from all of us.

KOAL KRINGLE
(dry)
Thank you, Squalid. But at this point, it seems a little forced, honestly.

Koal wings his present like a frisbee off screen.

KOAL KRINGLE
(dancing to the rhyme)
This year, the children will get exactly what I've GOTTEN!! Only one day of gifts, whether they've been nice, good or just plain ROTTEN!!
(dry, to Squalid)
I checked, and they've all had birthdays.
(rhyming again)
So I hope the children hold their birthday toys DEAR!! Because Christmas is all about me this YEAR!!
(to Squalid)
And maybe, just maybe, again the year AFTER!! Just think: A world with less presents and a lot less...
(turning away, to himself)
...Laughter!!

Everyone mumbles with approval. Buddy mumbles some more.

KOAL KRINGLE
Now, if I may direct your attention to the old Elf in CHAINS!! It's the sizzle-show my friends, a show about PAIN!!

ANGLE ON: PAPA ELF, CHAINED UP, HELPLESS, LOWERS FROM THE CEILING. HE'S ABOUT FORTY FEET ABOVE THE FIERY PIT.

Huge gears turn, allowing a thick iron chain to lower Papa Elf. Buddy drops his mug. He's horrified.

BUDDY
PAPA ELF!
(off looks, covering)
--Is bad.
(as if scolding a dog)
BAD Papa Elf!... Boo!

ON PAPA ELF as he's lowered toward the fire. He spots Buddy...

PAPA ELF
(noticing, to himself)
Buddy!

KOAL KRINGLE
Now sit back and relax, I think you'll dig this show the MOST!! Our puny, pointy friend is about to be -- let's see, what's the word -- *TOAST!!*

Yuck, the black parakeet, lands on Koal Kringle's shoulder and begins whistling the Door's 'The End.' (This is a real bird with a claymation character).

Buddy is freaking out. Confused, Petrified, Nervous. He has to do something but he's not sure what. He starts by standing up.

SOUTH POLE EATER
No standing during dinner.

BUDDY
Oh, I was just going to get more sauerkraut.

Buddy walks away carefully, steering himself over toward the big iron gears that are lowering Papa Elf.

He looks up at Papa Elf, then uses his hands to try and stop the big gears from turning. It doesn't work. Now he uses his whole body.

He looks around, the coast is still clear. Now he takes his spoon and rams it into the gear shaft. Plink! The powerful gears crush the spoon easily.

Now Buddy dumps some sauerkraut into the gears. That doesn't work either. Papa Elf is still lowering.

Looking for other ideas, Buddy turns and--

REVEAL: KOAL KRINGLE IS RIGHT NEXT TO HIM.

KOAL KRINGLE
Well, well, well, do we have an IMPOSTER?! Perhaps two elves will burn tonight, what fun, I'm becoming quite the MONSTER!!

Suddenly Buddy reaches over and GRABS YUCK, THE CANARY. He holds him tight, ready to sacrifice the bird.

BUDDY
All right! Listen up! I've got Yuck and he's captured! Now, you let Papa Elf down and--
(the bird pecks his head)
OW! Snicker-fizzle.
(the bird flies off)
Wups.

KOAL KRINGLE
Guards! Chain this one up!

Buddy puts his hands over his head, giving up. But as the guards approach, Buddy stops -- It looks like he might sneeze.

BUDDY SNEEZES against the cave wall and black soot powder blinds him, eyes in pain, he stumbles around...

WHAT FOLLOWS IS THE MOST PREPOSTEROUSLY LONG SERIES OF PRATFALLS EVER SHOT ON FILM. (in the tradition of Charlie Chaplin, the Marx Brothers and the Three Stooges).

Nothing absurd is off limits. Grease, marbles, lamp shades, sharp nails, sour cream... The whole thing will be orchestrated to be as stupid as possible.

During this pratfall marathon, Buddy hits a switch that causes Papa Elf to LOWER MUCH FASTER. Then hits it again, causing Papa Elf to STOP just in the nick of time.

THE FINALE: Buddy opens a coal bin and hot coals fall into the back of his overalls... Running around pounding his hot pants, this nonsense ends with Buddy sitting his rear end into a cold bucket of water. Ahh.

Having just witnessed the most absolutely retarded series of things that could ever happen, the South Pole Elves stare blankly at Buddy, butt in a bucket.

BUT NOW BUDDY CAN'T HELP IT. HE STARTS TO LAUGH. He laughs a little and then he laughs a lot. He laughs harder and harder, belting out belly laughs.

PAPA ELF starts to laugh too.

ANGLE ON: A South Pole Elf. He listens to this foreign sound, and then tries out a little chuckle for himself. It feels good.

Now another South Pole Elf starts to laugh... And another... And another...

BEFORE WE KNOW IT, THE WHOLE SOUTH POLE IS ROARING WITH LAUGHTER.

KOAL KRINGLE
STOP LAUGHING! STOP LAUGHING NOW!

No one is listening. They are only laughing.

KOAL KRINGLE
(calling out individuals)
Dusty! You will stop this right now! Soily, Grubby and Mucky! You three are really pushing it. Filthy and Rank! I will demote you so fast... Squalid! You of all people...

At this point, South Pole Elves are rolling in the aisles. Buddy takes the opportunity to SAVE PAPA ELF.

KOAL KRINGLE TRIES TO STOP BUDDY HIMSELF, But Buddy is bigger and stronger. Buddy wrangles Koal Kringle and lifts him up. And now:

<u>BUDDY HOLDS KOAL KRINGLE OVER THE FIERY PIT</u>.

Papa Elf is shocked at Buddy's move. In fact, Buddy himself is pretty shocked at what he's doing...

KOAL KRINGLE
(as he dangles)
You don't have the guts. You Northern boys are too nice to drop ME!! So let me go, you Christmas jerk. And next year no one will stop ME!!

BUDDY
You tried to rhyme, but you said 'ME!!' twice.

KOAL KRINGLE
No I didn't.

BUDDY
Yes you did.

PAPA ELF (O.S.)
Um, Buddy?

KOAL KRINGLE
No I didn't.

BUDDY
Yes you d--

PAPA ELF (O.S.)
BUDDY!

REVEAL: Papa Elf is slipping slowly into the pit...

PAPA ELF
I'm sort of, um, *going to burn.*

BUDDY TOSSES KOAL KRINGLE SAFELY BACK into the dining hall.

Koal Kringle is beaten. But YUCK IS NOT GIVING UP. He lands on top of Buddy's head and starts pecking really hard. Buddy struggles to fight off the canary.

BUDDY
(getting pecked in the head)
Ow! Yuck! Stop that.
(an Elf swear)
Douglas Fir!

Buddy shoos the canary away and now positions himself to save Papa Elf. Buddy reaches down into the pit, stretches -- Reaching for Papa's hand -- and then finally:

THEIR HANDS CONNECT.

CUT TO:

EXT. SKY - NIGHT

THE SLEIGH IS UP AND FLYING! BUDDY AND TINY PAPA ELF RACE THROUGH THE SKY, BACK TOWARD THE NORTH POLE.

PAPA ELF
(to camera)
Buddy brought laughter to the South Pole. And he was bringing, well, me, back up North.

EXT. THE NORTH POLE - LATER

Susie, Jovie, Santa and all of the Elves are sitting around, bummed out. Ming Ming blows a bubble that pops.

SANTA
(checks watch, gives up)
Ming Ming, Snow Flake, help Santa take his boots off, would you?

MING MING
(defeated, to snow flake)
He's taking his boots off.

SUSIE
WAIT! LOOK!

POV: Off in the distance, a light is coming toward them.

SANTA
It's just a satellite.

SUSIE
No it's not... It's my Dad.

Yes, the reindeer and sleigh are heading toward them. Buddy and Papa Elf are heroes. The North Pole goes crazy.

Santa has never seen such a beautiful sight.

SANTA
Well, how about that?
(happy)
MING MING!

MING MING
(thilled)
Yes Santa!?

SANTA
CHAP STICK.

MING MING
Right away!

We follow Ming Ming as he runs off, but--

MING MING IS SUDDENLY RUN OVER BY THE SLEIGH. FLATTENED.

BUDDY
Sorry Ming Ming!
(to the reindeer)
Woah!

SANTA
Pump the brakes!

ON SANTA: He winces as we HEAR THEM CRASH.

SANTA
So much for the sauna.

REVEAL: BUDDY AND PAPA ELF HAVE RAMMED THEMSELVES INTO INTO A NOTRH POLE BUILDING, WITH LOT'S OF STEAM COMING OUT. BUT THEY'RE SAFE.

ALL THE ELVES
Buddy did it! He saved Christmas!

All the Elves swarm Buddy. In the chaos, Buddy gets confused, trying to find his family. Like Rocky One, Buddy calls out for his 'Adriane' as he's mauled by fans.

BUDDY
(as he's mauled by elves)
JOVIE!
(lost in the crowd)
JOVIE!

Now Buddy frees himself. REVEAL: Jovie is standing there, looking wonderful. Buddy gives her a big Christmas hug.

They pull away to REVEAL:

SUSIE.

SUSIE
Hey Dad.

BUDDY
Susie.

Buddy and Susie walk off for a moment together.

BUDDY
Listen, I'm sorry you have a Elf for a Dad. I want you to know, I'm going to be making some big changes, first of all, I'm--

SUSIE
--DAD.

BUDDY
Yeah?

SUSIE
You *are a Elf*. But I wouldn't want it any other way.

BUDDY
Really?

SUSIE
I don't care what anyone else thinks. You're the coolest Dad there is.

BUDDY
You mean it?

SUSIE
Yeah, I mean it.

BUDDY
Well, don't think I can't be normal if I want to. Because I can. I can do it. I'm growing a goatee... I joined a bowling league... And I'm off of candy, for real this time...

SUSIE
It's okay, you can eat all the candy you want, Dad.

Susie smiles. Buddy is touched. Music swells-- But:

MING MING (O.S.)
Papa Elf? What are you doing here? Shouldn't you be in the woods?

ANGLE ON: Papa Elf walks slow and sad through the crowd. Little Elves part, stepping out of his way.

KRUMPET
Yeah, aren't you going to turn the presents into Christmas dust?

SNOW FLAKE
What's wrong?

PAPA ELF
It's too late. I can't, um, I can't do all the presents all in one night. There's just not enough time. I'm sorry.
(looking way up at Buddy)
You saved me. But, I'm afraid we missed Christmas this year.

BUDDY
Maybe I can help you!

PAPA ELF
No one can help me Buddy, it's something I do, alone.

This is devastating to everyone. Especially Buddy. He looks up at the sky, then looks down, sad.

Now Papa Elf looks at the camera and speaks as narrator.

PAPA ELF (V.O.)
(to camera as narrator)
At the most, I can dissolve about five, maybe six hundred thousand presents in a day. This load was just too big, it wasn't even going to be close.

Everyone looks around, helpless and sad.

PAPA ELF (V.O.)
There was no way around it, we, um, we missed Christmas.
(to the audience)
Sorry.

THE END.

FADE TO BLACK.

MUSIC CUE: THE SAD 'GREENSLEEVES'

We hang on this black screen for a beat.

PAPA ELF (V.O.)
Only later did I find out what really happened...

THE SAD MUSIC STOPS.

FADE UP:

INT. A HOUSE IN FLORIDA - NIGHT

Santa of Sweden breaks through some floorboards.

PAPA ELF (V.O.)
I guess, when the other Santas from around the world heard we were in trouble, each one decided to pitch in...

INT. A HOUSE IN DELEWARE - NIGHT

Icelandic Goblins swing from one window sill to another.

EXT. COMPTON - NIGHT

A SPANISH SANTA on a Donkey walks through 'the hood.'

PAPA ELF (V.O.)
After giving gifts to their own country, they made their way over to ours, and they picked up the slack...

MONTAGE: 'CHRISTMAS MORNING'

-In Iowa, a kid opens a box.

IOWA KID
What's knockwurst?

PAPA ELF (V.O.)
And for one year, Christmas wasn't about the presents you got. It was about the act of giving itself.

-A kid gets a long 'Ricola' ALP HORN.

-A girl gets a jug that says, BANANA BEER.

-A kid opens a box.

DELEWARE KID
Whoa, a machete? Cool!

The kid stabs with his machete, slicing off part of the Christmas tree.

-JESS and JAMIE, the girl's from Susie's class, each open their gifts. They are not happy.

JESS
What's a walking stick?

JAMIE
Bronde Sultana Fruitlaof? How is this cool?

-MR. SPICER takes the lid off of a box and a LIVE MONKEY jumps out and attacks him.

-Another girl wears LEDERHOSEN and dances, happy.

-A girl opens a BONSAI TREE.

IDAHO GIRL
It's beautiful.

-A boy puts on a TRIBAL HEAD DRESS and starts dancing around, having fun.

-In a sweet final gift scene, a child sits under a tree, trying to learn how to play the SITAR, happy.

ROLL END CREDITS.

MUSIC CUE: 'START ME UP' by the Rolling Stones.

FADE TO BLACK.